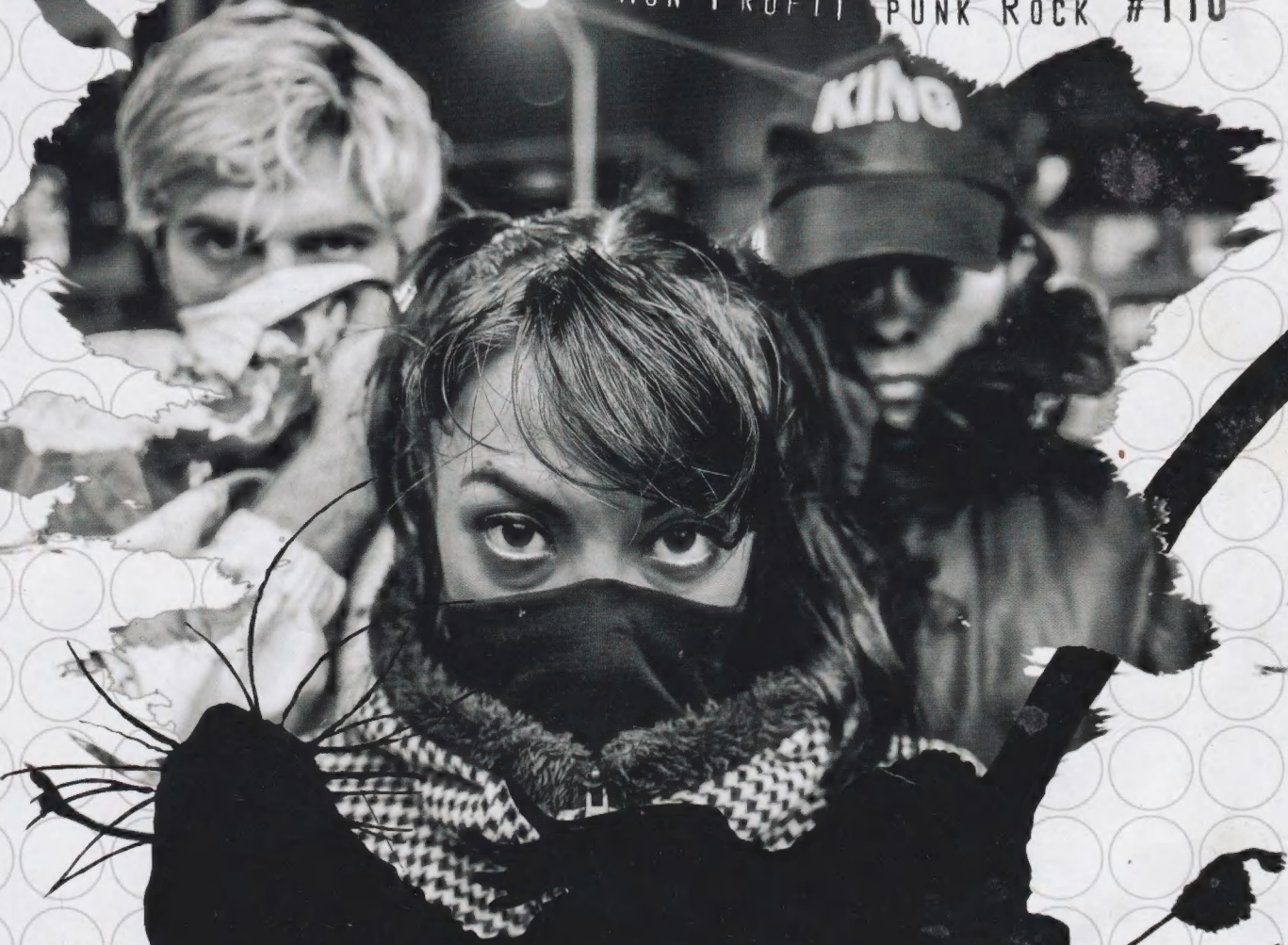


WE DO OUR PART

# RAZZORCAKE

NON-PROFIT PUNK ROCK #110



XETAS

ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO A VEGAN DIET

KAMALA LYN PARKS

WEIRD PAUL

DIVTECH



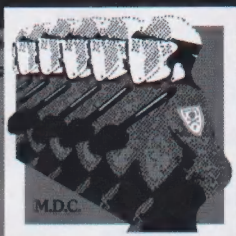




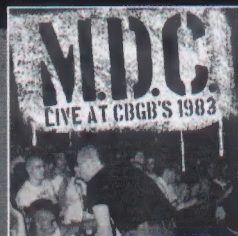
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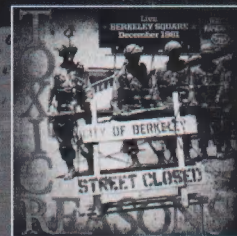
M.D.C. Live at CBGB's 1983 LP BCR190-1 650557019019



The Faction Destroys O.C. - Cab's 50th Birthday Bash! LP/CD + DVD BCR203-1 LP / BCR203-2 CD + DVD 650557020312 LP / 650557020390 CD + DVD



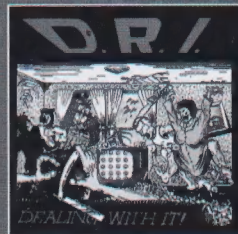
Toxic Reasons Independence LP/CD + DVD BCR186-1 LP / BCR186-2 CD + DVD 650557018616 LP / 650557019994



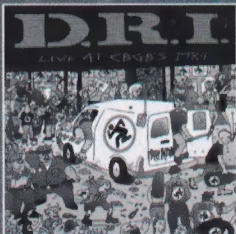
Toxic Reasons Live at Berkeley Square 1987 LP BCR170-1 650557017016



D.R.I. The Dirty Rotten CD BCR099-2 650557009928



D.R.I. Dealing With It LP/CD BCR111-1 LP / BCR111-2 CD 650557011112 LP / 650557011128 CD



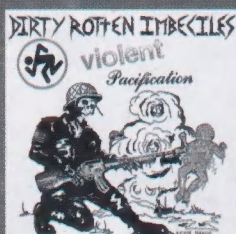
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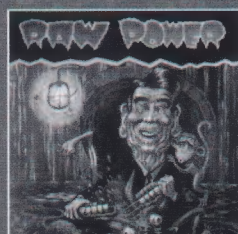
D.R.I. The Dirty Rotten LP/CD/EP BCR119-2 CD / BCR185-1 LP / BCR184-7 EP 650557011021 CD / 650557018513 LP / 650557018476 EP



D.R.I. Crossover - Millennium Edition LP/CD BCR160-1 LP / BCR100-2 CD 650557018018 LP / 650557018025 CD



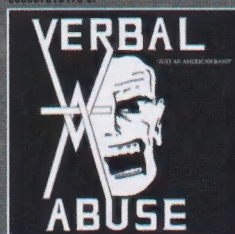
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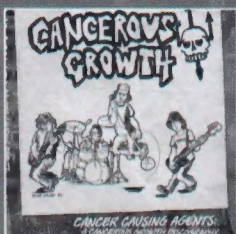
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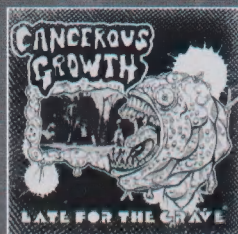
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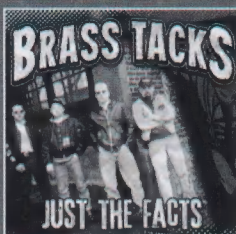
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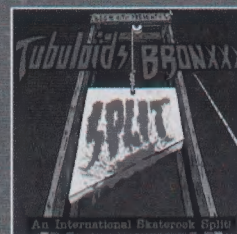
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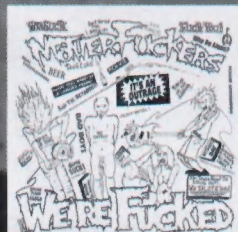
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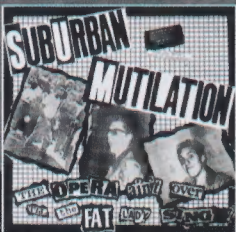
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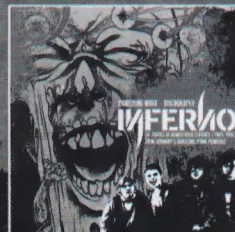
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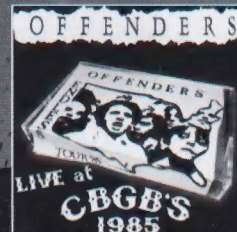
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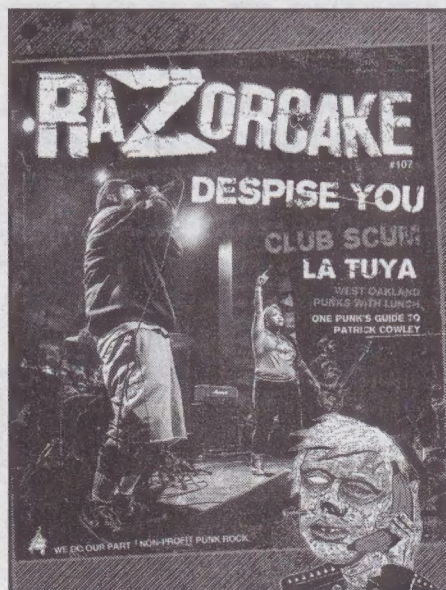
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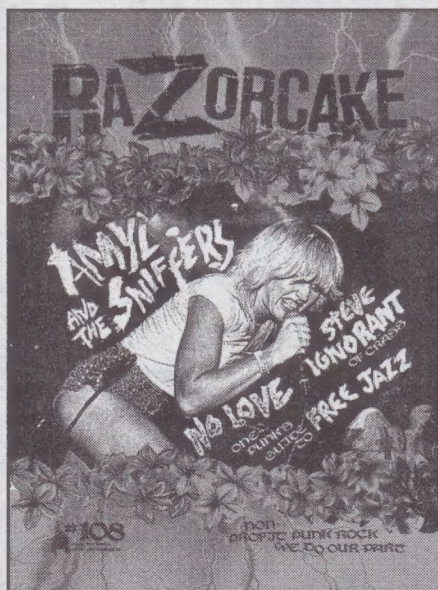
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ARE

**RAZORCAKE** is a magazine dedicated to DIY punk, independent culture, and amplifying unheard voices. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we're sustained by subscriptions, donations, advertisements, and grants. All support is greatly appreciated. We feel when we work together, life is a little more bearable. On one side is a terrifying culture of manipulation, and on the other side are all of us.

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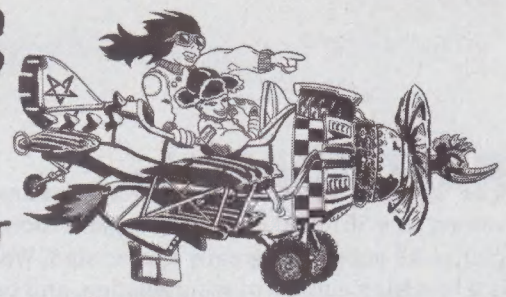
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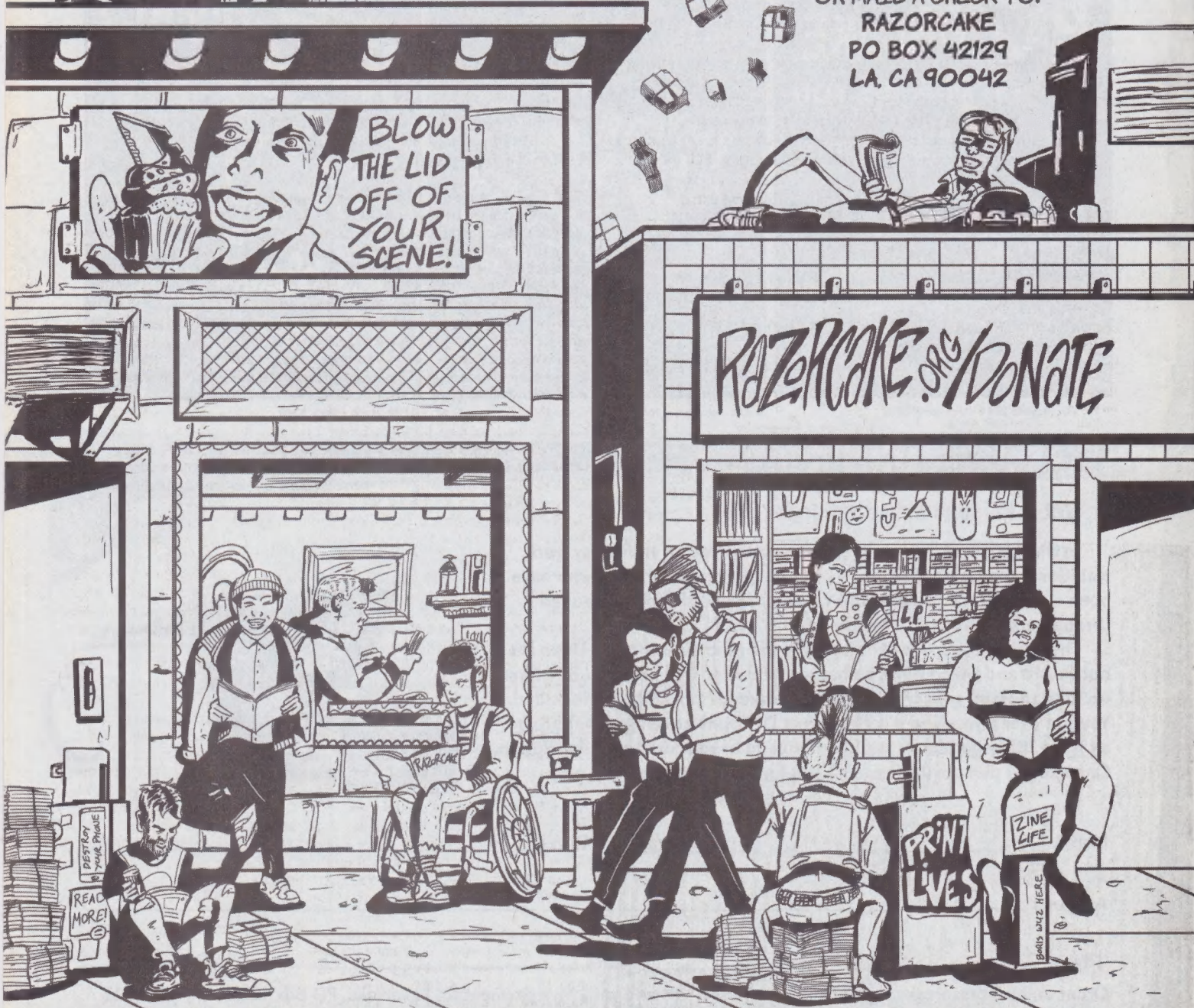


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## A Failure-Scented Success

I've been riding my bike regularly in Los Angeles for over a decade. Late last year, a friend I was riding with suggested we do a hard, supported ride up through some nearby mountains. Shared suffering somehow makes it more tolerable. It feels good to vent out loud, to be distracted from screaming legs and aching lungs. We both bought tickets. Due to her new job yanking her chain, she had to back out the day before the ride.

I'm in a weird spot with cycling. I'm not a beginner and nowhere near advanced. I'm also not competitive. Hundreds of people showed up at 6AM for the ride and took off like a shot. The first ten-plus miles were fast but flat. The next twenty-five miles were up hill, with traffic. I didn't want to blow myself out, so I kept my own pace. It's entirely possible I underestimated the difficulty of the climb and I didn't train enough. It's deflating to be passed by so many cyclists in full conversation, breathing barely labored while I strained to keep my pedals rotating and spiraled into a darker and darker place.

I'd been in a similar situation a couple years back—on a longer and harder-than-usual ride, alone in the netherworld between beginner and advanced cyclists, wondering what the hell I was doing. It certainly wasn't fun, but it was a challenge. That ride ended almost in heat stroke as I abandoned it seventy miles in. I caught a train home, was too weak to stand, sat on the floor and sweat so much people got out of their seats to move away from me. I didn't blame them. I smelled horrible, I looked like I pissed myself, and I left a pool when I got to my stop.

This hill ride was supposed to be seventy-five miles there and back. There were no signs for how long it was to the summit, so I guesstimated

with my bike's computer. The first twenty miles up were tolerable, coaching myself with ongoing math, like, "Bud, you're going six miles an hour. One more hour." I'd focus on something, like the bump on my nose, then zip back into the suffering cocoon. Then I couldn't top three miles an hour. No one else had passed me for about half an hour, a sign I was dead last. I got off my bike and tried to walk, but that was more painful. The view of the San Gabriel Valley was expansive. I sat to take it in and was attacked by flies. A younger me would have continued up that hill to prove that I wasn't a quitter, even if I damaged my body. The older me needed to get home in one piece. My thighs were jittering and my mind began to float. I needed focus for the descent. I did not make it to the top. I abandoned another ride. I have nothing to prove.

Alone for hours and back down into another heat wave—ninety degrees in late October—I rode back to the starting point. I pedaled past the people celebrating and recuperating, not feeling qualified to partake in their shared accomplishment, and went home alone. I'd ridden seventy-four miles.

I can't confirm it, but I'm convinced the skin cancer on my nose—a diagnosis made earlier this year—was from cycling in the California sun, sweating through sunscreen and not reapplying during long rides. Bicycle hats are a bit stupid. Their bills are shallow and the cancer was right below where the hat cast a shadow on my nose. Tomorrow—after an operation that almost required plastic surgery, after an infection, and after a troubling abnormal growth—I go in for my final evaluation. I feel good about my prognosis. I'll be riding my bike to the appointment.

—Todd Taylor

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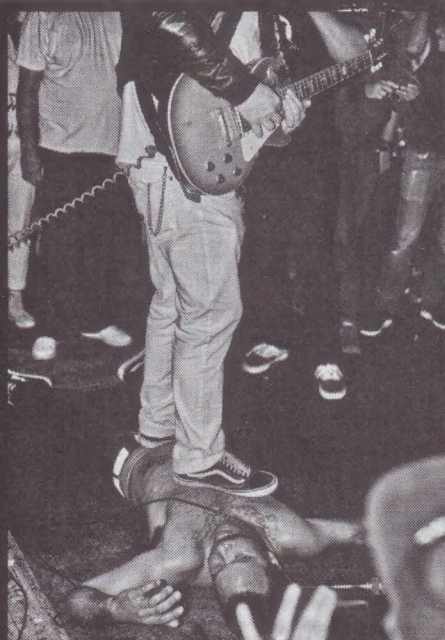
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**Age isn't just  
time passing.  
It's time breaking  
you—your will,  
your heart,  
your beliefs.**

—Sara Gran  
*The Infinite Blacktop*



**They don't  
make it out  
of the house  
very often,  
but when  
they do...**

**SHIM live  
at The Saloon  
in Downtown  
Ventura, Calif.  
Photo by  
Mycul Davis**

**THANK YOU:** Identities concealed until the cover's open. Eyes forward and focused. Listen to The Tower thanks to Douglas Burns for the cover design and Mike Manewitz for the Xetas cover photo; "Ally" the fuck out of that verb thanks to Bone Dust's handclasp in Donna's column; Al Gore foresaw it, Bill Pinkel recorded it: a polar bear on a Hogwarts spire in Jennifer's column; LIVE!!! THAT!!! FUCKING!!! DREAM!!! thanks to Steve Thueson for Norb's superhero-cum-Three-Stooges moment; That's some reckless ice cream truck driving thanks to RoQue Torres for Dale's illo.; Thanks for cool English teachers like Bridget Valles, who facilitated the Watts Poets' verses this issue; Peacocks for protection. Their feathers are eyes on their backs thanks again to RoQue Torres for the Puro Pinche Poetry illo.; I fact-checked. Yup. Flat-tracking motorcycles on rubber-burned soda pop syrup thanks to Kat Wanish for the in-the-field Rhythm Chicken photo; 3-D fruit cocktail experimental movies, cake pillow, three-handed hot dog thanks to Laura Collins for the collage illustrations in One Punk's Guide to a Vegan Diet; Your Assück/Peni chocolate's in my ELF/ Atari Teenage Riot peanut butter! Thanks to Craven Rock and Jessee Zeroxed for the Divtech interview and layout; Who's the human-connects-the-dots between Maximum Rocknroll, 924 Gilman, BYOFL, Operation Ivy, Cringer, and BART? Thanks to Daniel Makagon, Lauren Denitzio, Murray Bowles, Terry Taylor, Jasper Pattison, Bailey Kobelin, Bruce Treasure, and Martin Wong for the Kamala Parks interview, layout, and photos; According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, there is no law against picking Bluebonnets in Texas. However, there are some areas where it is illegal or against the rules thanks to Jennifer Federico, Angela Betancourt, and Eric Baskauskas for the Xetas interview, photos, and layout; Weird Paul's video—by one of the United States' longest vloggers—on how he maintains his haircut is earnest and revealing, thanks to Rick V., Dylan Davis, Jennifer McFeely, Niffer Desmond, and Jared Fix LA Lofts for the Weird Paul interview, layout, and photos.

"When a record comes along with songs and lyrics that really resonate, it just feels different. It's exhilarating! It feels like it used to feel!" —Daryl, *Black Dots, Everything Has Gotta Change LP*. Thanks to 110's rotation of music, zine, and book reviewers: Mark Twistworthy, Lorien Lamarr, Art Ettinger, Matt Average, Juan Espinosa, Michael T. Fournier, Rich Cocksedge, Kayla Greet, Mike Frame, Emma Alice Johnson, Paul J. Comeau, Chad Williams, Matt Werts, Ty Stranglehold, Norb, Chris Terry, Billups Allen, Jimmy Alvarado, Tim Brooks, The Lord Kveldulfr, Sean Koepenick, Camylle Reynolds, Ian Wise, Simone Carter, Cynthia Pinedo, Gwen Static, Theresa W., CJ Miller, Keith Rosson, Craven Rock, Candace Hansen, Ryan Nichols, Rene Navarro, Rick V., Jim Woster, Kurt Morris, Iggy Nicklbottum, Tricia Ramos, and Jimmy Cooper.

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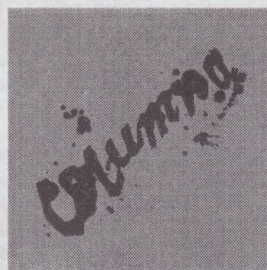
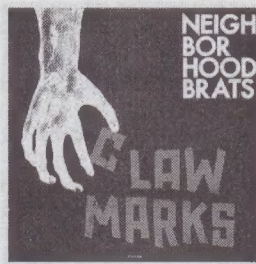
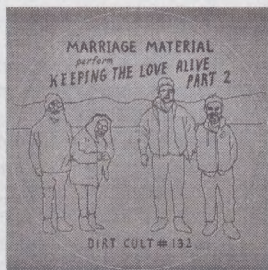
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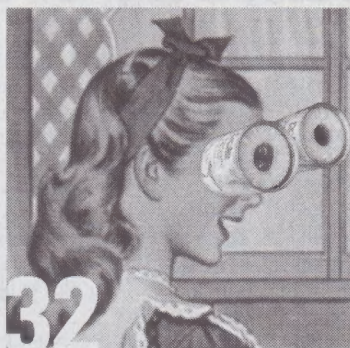


Issue #110 June/July 2019

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Kacie Sosebee.



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78 Record *They have transcended the bootboy world into something totally new and interesting. KILLLLLLLLLLLLLLL.*  
104 Zine *Damn, the colors really bring my eye holes a great joy.*  
109 Book *This book proves that you're really never too old to jump in the pit. But also, what are you proving by doing so?*

The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, *Razorcake* wouldn't be what it is.

Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Kari Hamanaka, Rishbha Bhagi, Donna Ramone, Marcos Siref, Derek Whipple, Dayna Castillo, Ever Velasquez, Nicole Macias, Paul Silver, Matthew Hart, Chris Baxter, Kayla Greet, Jimmy Alvarado, Yvonne Drazan, Dale Drazan, Josh Rosa, Jennifer Federico, Ethan Shapiro, Samantha McBride, Skinny Dan, Alice Bag, Candace Hansen, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Jason Willis, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Meztli Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Kevin Dunn, Jennifer Whiteford, Steve Thueson, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Lauren Denitzio, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, CJ Miller, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, John Miskelly, Andy Garcia, Camylle Reynolds, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Chris Devlin, Emma Alice Johnson, Tim Brooks, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Chris Terry, Jackie Rusted, Art Fuentes, Dylan Davis, Becky Minjarez, Keith Rosson, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, Danny Rust, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Noemi, Eden Kittiver, Jesse Zeroxed, Garrett Barnwell, Nørb, Chris Mason, Tim Jamison, Kiyoshi Nakazawa, Shane Milner, James Rosario, Martin Wong, Rosie Gonc, Elly Dallas, Andre Lux, Charlie Murphy, Michael Seymour Blake, Charlotte Pili, Silas, Karr Antunes, Ivan Ehlers, Ollie Mikse, Eskander Fairweather, Mikie Manzer, Rick V., Chris Kill, Jayda Abello, Sam Grinberg, Cathy Hannah, Kelly O'Grady, Madi Strong, Benny Hope, Rita Sapunor, Cristy C. Road, Jeremy Jones, Taleen Kali, Dino Everett, Lorien Lamarr, Will Kenneth, Will Malkus, Alexis Ratkevich, RoQue Torres, Johnny and Elwood Wells, Billups Allen, Nick Riggs, Andrew Wagher, Abdul Vas, and John Ross Bowie.

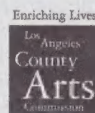
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This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by grants from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles Arts Commission.





**“Ally” is  
a verb.**

# Our Mistakes, Part 2: Allyship

Fifty people died in a New Zealand masjid when a white supremacist terrorist murdered them. In the aftermath, the discussions included: kind white people at mosques, a white Australian politician, New Zealand’s prime minister, PewDiePie, Egg Boy, Chelsea Clinton, Donald Trump, and the white terrorist. Only a handful of people talked about who the victims were, how Muslims, especially those in countries like New Zealand, were feeling, the acceptance of islamophobia in popular culture and politics, the endless U.S. and European-sponsored wars in the Middle East and Africa that began as early as 1800 with the First Barbary War. Out of one thousand Hollywood movies with Arab characters from 1896 to 2000, one percent showed a positive depiction of Arabs. White Americans have a lot to account for in their views and treatment of Arabs and Muslims. Many know this and say they’re antiracist. Okay, that’s good. Now what are you planning to actively do next?

## Case Study: Gingerbread Houses

In issue #109, I used this case study to discuss “The Double Down,” a shitty reaction when someone defensively buckles down on their bullshit rather than admit they fucked up. I’ll be using it again to illustrate another point. To recap: after five years of living in Salt Lake City, I finally have a core group of punk friends, and we, inevitably, have a group chat. One member invited another friend to join the group. Enter: Tracy (not real name).

In December, looking for something fun to do together, I admitted that I had never made a gingerbread house. Below is the exact transcript of the group text as we attempted to determine if that upcoming Saturday would be a good time for all of us to make gingerbread houses together:

**Me:** This is stupid to ask but...can you actually eat them?

**Friend 1:** Most of the time

**Friend 1:** Sometimes they make them with stuff you can’t eat tho

**Friend 2:** Yeah I believe it depends how you make ‘em. Like sometimes you can overdo it and make it prettier with real glue. But you can also use frosting and shit if you’re actually cool

**Tracy:** How foreign are you

**Friend 1:** Wait wtf is that question...

**Friend 1:** uhh...kinda not joking...

**Me:** Like, 50-60%, I guess?

**Tracy:** I mean I don’t really know Donna sorry did you like grow up with a poor family or something? I made them at friends houses. Gingerbread houses are kind of overrated.

**Tracy:** It just seemed like a foreign thing to say. Bitches love glutinous holiday activities.

**Tracy:** My bad I guess idk your life

**Friend 1:** [gif from *Mean Girls*, “Oh my god, Karen, you can’t just ask people why they’re white.”]

**Friend 1:** I’ll feel less awkward if I make a Means Girls reference

**Tracy:** I mean I never looked at Donna and assumed she wasn’t born here or that she didn’t grow up in a shithole. It was a valid question.

**Friend 1:** ehhe maybe I’m an asshole. But imho that’s a weird way to say that

**Friend 2:** In any case gingerbread houses are pretty overrated as a thing, I think I made them once in like the second grade for school?

**Friend 2:** They’re a mediocre way to consume sweets. But a great way to construct toy houses. It’s about the journey.

**Tracy:** \*They’re an architecturally pleasing way to consume sweets

Now, I get weird racist comments about once a week, and this one didn’t even make top ten worst for the year. But this one *hurt*. It hurt more than the others. The white allies I thought would come swinging at any hint of racism with spiked bats barely raised a finger. I managed to choke, too. I was so furious; it constantly seeped out of me for a month. I told coworkers about what happened to see how they would react (they were mortified). I told fellow women of color and they gave me their shared anger and healing hugs. I laughed about it, I cried about it. I talked to my therapist about it. I regularly woke up thinking about it. I wrote two damned columns about it.

Imagine a target: the outside circle is your town, the people around you. The inner circle is acquaintances and co-workers, people we see at shows. The bullseye is friends and family. Racist garbage is anticipated in the outer circles, but never the bullseye. Anything hurtful occurring in that bullseye is a shot at point-blank range. I assumed I was in a safe group; these were anarchists, antiracists, direct action punks. They were also white.

Friend 2’s senior thesis is on anti-racist action. Friend 3, who introduced us to Tracy, has the mantra “punch Nazis,” a statement which got her banned on Tinder, twice. Friend

3 was initially absent from the interaction but saw the texts shortly after and said nothing. Friend 1’s *Mean Girls* gif and my “50-60%” comment lacked the teeth this confrontation called for. We collectively shit the bed.

As of this writing, I have had the pleasure of sharing a room with Tracy twice. There was no apology, only shame and unsettling quiet. As far as I’m aware, no one has spoken to Tracy about their bullshit—because then everyone has to acknowledge their own complacency in letting racism go unchecked.

Everyone likes to call themselves an ally, but at this point it feels like something every white mom wears as a badge of honor while also referring to me as a “good Muslim” (because, you know, that’s an important qualifier that requires stating). “Ally” is a verb. The actions needed are obvious, and most of the time, I won’t even be in the room when someone needs to speak up. It’s not just the Nazis at shows or that big protest when I need you most, it’s in places like that group chat. As Malcolm X said, “America’s racism is among their own fellow whites. That’s where sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work.”

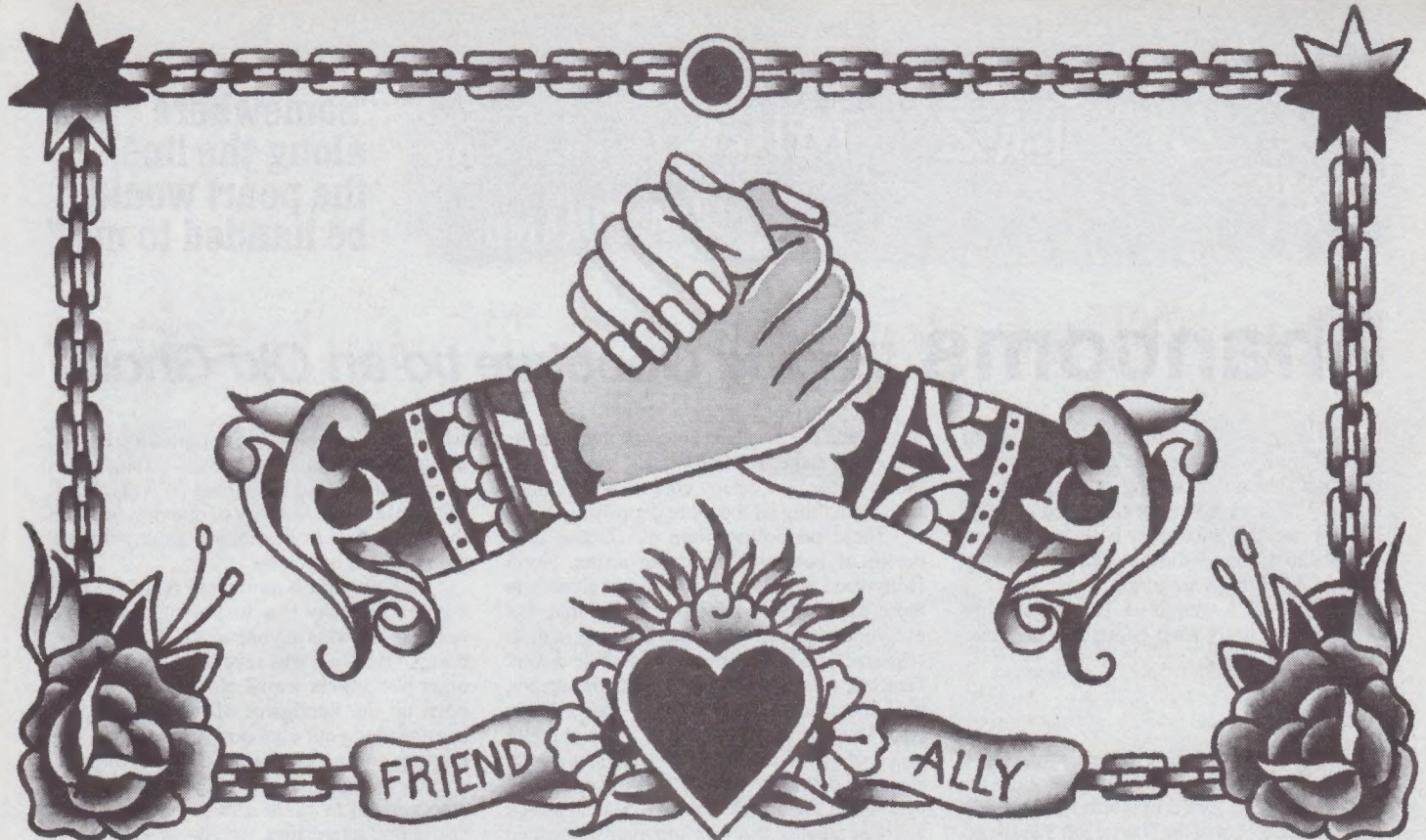
Sometimes, the right action is to stand in my corner. In my zine about growing up, *9-11 Never Left Me Forget* (PDF freely available through [Razorcake.org](http://Razorcake.org)), I told the story of Marcus the “Comedian.” He was the opener when wrestler Mick Foley was on a speaking tour in 2016. He made shitty jokes about not letting Muslims on airplanes and did a horrific impression of the Arabic language that ruined my night and left me crying in a comedy club. Three years later, I went to an indie wrestling event and he was the host. Afterwards, I was talking to friends and he came up to me, really excited about the cytid patches on my jacket. I scowled and pulled inward, gathering courage and the right words. Friends watched me and were at the ready. He asked if I had ever gone to the Mothman festival and I cut him off.

“Last time I saw you, you made really racist jokes about me and I have no interest in talking to you.”

He started stammering and didn’t know what I was talking about. My partner stepped in, “You made racist jokes about not letting Muslims on airplanes when we saw Mick Foley. That was fucked up.”

I made direct eye contact with Marcus and didn’t budge. Neither did the friends around me.





BONE DUST | @BON3DUST

## Racist garbage is anticipated in the outer circles, but never the bullseye. Anything hurtful occurring in that bullseye is a shot at point-blank range.

"I'm sorry you were offended."

I glared and said nothing.

"I'm sorry."

He didn't mean it.

"It's only comedy."

My eyes narrowed, and he looked so small and uncomfortable.

"I'm sorry." He almost meant it. And walked away dejected.

Friends started laughing, cheering and one gave me the sweetest high-five I've ever had the pleasure of receiving. Marcus is going to keep making racist jokes, I'm sure, but maybe he'll think twice. At least he learned his actions are not free from critique just because he hides them within bad comedy sets. His actions have serious consequences, least of which is me refusing to talk to him. Maybe he even learned Muslim women are multi-dimensional, complex people who might also love wrestling and cryptozoology. My friends let me stand my ground and supported me when I spoke truth to power, and cheered me afterwards. That was excellent allyship in the moment.

The Anti-Oppression Network puts it perfectly: "Allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability

with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined—our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with." It's emotionally supporting the marginalized, it's calling out family members, it's buying from small businesses owned by people of color, it's going to the protest, it's egging a racist, it's punching a Nazi, it's listening and believing, it's recognizing your own biases, it's dismantling white fragility along with white supremacy, it's knowing when to take the backseat, it's questioning your discomfort.

I've talked to Friend 1 about how the entire gingerbread houses situation made me feel and asked his advice on what I should do, and what he should do. I thanked him for being the only person who said something when I choked. He apologized to me. I know next time, he'll come swinging.

I've talked to Friend 2. I pointed out his dedication to anti-racist action and expressed how painful the experience was for me. He admitted that he didn't initially see how racist it was. He took accountability and apologized to me. I know next time, he'll recognize it.

I talked to Friend 3 one night for five hours. We talked about a lot, and we were both

emotionally raw when we both work hard to be resilient, tough people. She listened. She took accountability and apologized to me. She's doing the work most allies avoid, and I am so grateful to know her.

Is there any saving Tracy or Marcus? Maybe. That's not on me, though. That's on the rest of you. If you're committed to racial justice, and care about someone's racist salvation, then do the work. Preach, proselytize, and convert the nonbelievers, just like I try to do with this column, and my existence. Bring them into our fold. Guide them towards deliverance and liberation.

It's been centuries of systemic distrust, dislike, violence, and misrepresentation of Arabs and Muslims in white Western countries. That isn't going to disappear tomorrow. This column isn't going to end it. Fifty people were massacred while praying, and the flowers and well-wishing isn't enough to stop it from happening again. But maybe, with allies and action, we can chip away at these systems. If we're lucky, we may even dismantle them for good. Or humans go extinct—I'm good with either outcome.

—Donna Ramone



RAZORCAKE 07





# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"Somewhere along the line, the pearl would be handed to me."**

## Phantoms *Saying Goodbye to an Old Ghost*

When you write about music, you spend a lot of time with musicians, and eventually they get around to asking if you play an instrument or have ever been in a band.

For me the answer is both simple and complicated. Yes, I did play an Irish penny whistle, but I don't anymore.

And, yes, I was in a band, but only briefly; just barely long enough to play one not-so-glorious gig.

\*

My first job in Los Angeles was at a coffee shop called Eagles Coffee Pub on Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood.

When I got out of the Navy, I left San Diego and went back to my home state of Virginia to go to college. After four years in Appalachia, I was eager to go back to California.

I didn't know North Hollywood from Norwalk but a shipmate from the Navy had an open bedroom in the apartment he shared with his wife. That didn't strike me as an ideal living situation, but my cousin Mark, who worked as a Hollywood screenwriter, also lived in North Hollywood. I figured if things went sideways with my shipmate, I could go to my cousin for help.

So I crash landed in North Hollywood. I didn't have a car and Eagles was a ten-minute walk from my apartment. It was the end of the summer of 1992. I was twenty-four years old, and I was in slacker heaven.

The job varied depending on the shift. In the morning I brewed coffee and toasted bagels. In the afternoons I made sandwiches and whipped up cappuccinos. In the evenings I washed dishes and mopped the floors. It wasn't all that different than the work I did in the Navy, except my coworkers and customers were much more interesting and attractive.

As the new guy, I got the shifts no one else wanted. Opening on weekend mornings. Closing on weekday nights. One of those shifts was on open mic night when singer-songwriters from all over the San Fernando Valley would drag their acoustic guitars into the shop and sing awful imitations of Alanis Morissette and Leonard Cohen songs. I fucking hated it.

It's not that these musicians were terrible, because they weren't. I was never under the illusion that they lacked talent. On some nights, when it was extremely slow, and there was hardly anyone in the shop except me, the

owner, and the musician crooning away on the makeshift stage, I'd find myself moved by a tender verse or a catchy chorus, which made the whole thing all the more depressing.

These performers were all chasing their dream of becoming recording artists. North Hollywood was lousy with dream chasers in those days. Maybe it's always like that, but everyone who worked at Eagles, and most of its customers, had their own version of the dream. Dancers, actors, musicians. I had the dream, too. I wanted to be a writer. I didn't know what I wanted to write or how I was going to go about doing it, but I'd taken the first crucial steps. I'd gotten the fuck out of Virginia and set up shop in the dream factory. To quote a Jack Kerouac passage that was important to me then but reeks of white privilege now, I trusted that "Somewhere along the line, the pearl would be handed to me."

What was so embarrassing to me about the singer-songwriters on open mic night was how naked they were in their need to be loved. When I scribbled my thoughts, I did so in the privacy of my journal. When actors and dancers put themselves out there, they did it within the confines of the audition. The world would never know if they flopped during a callback for a laundry detergent commercial, which was exactly the way it should be.

But these singer-songwriters were different. They let it all out there to the accompaniment of shrieking espresso machines and the clanking of dishes. I found the whole sad affair dispiriting. At the end of my shift, I'd work the caffeine out of my system by mopping the floor while listening to Tom Waits and wonder what was the point of anything.

Then one night a performer came in who called himself Stan And The Phantoms. There were no Phantoms. It was just Stan. The Phantoms, presumably, were imaginary people or real ghosts.

Well, I thought, this is different.

\*

How to describe Stan? He had gaunt features, a wiry physique, and bore a slight resemblance to Iggy Pop, a vibe he seemingly encouraged by keeping his sandy hair cut at roughly the same length.

Stan was the kind of person who lunged at you when he shook your hand, like he'd been waiting all week to meet you and

wasn't going to blow the opportunity. He had a big, toothy smile that always struck me as sincere. If he liked something he'd say, "Isn't this cool?" He had a way of drawing you into the things he was passionate about, which is the best kind of person.

Stan played his guitar and sang his songs with an intensity that was always at least a notch above what anyone else in the room was doing. Usually it was several notches. Where other performers would close their eyes and open up the floodgates of their souls, Stan commanded your attention in a way that was riveting and never needy—at least while he was on the stage. He had the air of someone who wanted to share something he thought you'd find interesting. And he was right.

Offstage he was the same person. He came at you with the same intensity. He was a chain smoker and prone to rabbit movements. Whenever I brought him a cup of coffee he would have to will himself to calm down long enough not to make a mess of things. He smiled easily, laughed lustily. I don't know if it was the first time I met him or during one of his solo performances at Eagles he sang a song called "Go West."

This is me, I thought. He's singing about me.

\*

I don't know what Stan saw in me. Actually, that's not true. He saw things in me that I like about myself today, but weren't evident in my character then. I was a different person, full of secret ambition and massively insecure, so it's more accurate to say I don't know what made him bother to look for those qualities in me.

But he did and I repaid Stan by opening up to him. I told him all kinds of things about my childhood. I revealed that I had grown up taking Irish dance and music lessons and had learned to play the penny whistle. This delighted Stan, not as an amusing insight into the surly barista who worked the coffee shop he liked to haunt, but because he wanted me to jam with him sometime.

I quickly backed down, made excuses that it had been years since I played, and insisted that I wasn't very good. Stan wasn't having it. He insisted I at least give it a shot. I don't remember what he said or how he said it. But it was clear he didn't care if I was any good. Good was subjective. He cared about





STAN ON RIGHT WITH A PHANTOM | PHOTO BY JIM RULAND

**We played a matinee show on St. Patrick's Day. There was sawdust on the floor, a shuffleboard table in the corner, and green beer served in enormous schooners.**

connecting with people. If you played an instrument or sang a song or recited a poem, and in the moment of that performance, connected with the person next to you onstage or in the audience or passing by in the street, that was the only thing that mattered.

Despite my protestations, I wanted to play with Stan. And despite Stan's disavowals of value judgments like good and bad, Stan was a very good musician, both talented and hard working, but most importantly, he felt that playing music was something that was always worth doing.

So I picked up my penny whistle and I started practicing.

\*

Several months later, I was in a band with Stan, an accordion player named John, and a guy who played the conga drums. These were guys like me, amateur musicians with a shared enthusiasm for the Pogues, who had fallen into Stan's orbit.

We played a matinee show on St. Patrick's Day at a place in Canoga Park called Schoonerville. There was sawdust on the floor, a shuffleboard table in the corner, and green beer served in enormous schooners.

We called ourselves Twitching Bits.

Did we learn songs? We must have, but I can't remember them. I think we might have played "Galway Belle," a jaunty little waltz that's still burned into my memory. The highlight of the show, for me anyway, was a long, unstructured jam that moved at the speed of a slow air. Stan was the driver, and the conga player provided the beat. I was like a guitar soloist on the penny whistle, playing little riffs I'd composed that were full of trills and fills. I called that song "Old Baghdad," for reasons I don't recall.

The crowd liked us but hated the accordion player for some reason. We were paid in schooners of green beer, which no one drank because they all had to go back to work. I had to work, too, but I wasn't going to let all that beer go to waste. I glugged down as many schooners as I could and bought a T-shirt as a souvenir, which I still have.

I went back to Eagles feeling weird and out of sorts. Something had happened, but what? What was I supposed to do with this feeling? Is this how those singer-songwriters felt after they sang their asses off to a room full of disinterested people?

I didn't know, but I was in a band, had played a gig; no one could take that away from me.

\*

Earlier this year I learned of Stan's sudden passing from an old acquaintance at Eagles. Years of smoking had finally caught up with him. I hadn't seen Stan in decades, but we'd been in touch the last few years, sharing music and writing via email and the internet. He'd started up a project called Radio Highway with music, video, and spoken word. It was both quirky and cool, like its creator.

On a rainy Saturday morning in February, I drove up from San Diego to a mortuary home in Glendale. The service was unconventional but heartfelt. People told stories and sang songs. There was a lot of laughter and a lot of tears. I felt the usual anxiety about whether I belonged there. I'd been out of Stan's life for many years. But when the first speaker sang the opening to "Go West" I knew I was exactly where I needed to be.

R.I.P. Stan. I will always cherish being your phantom.

—Jim Ruland



RAZORPINE 09



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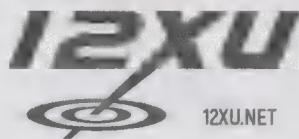
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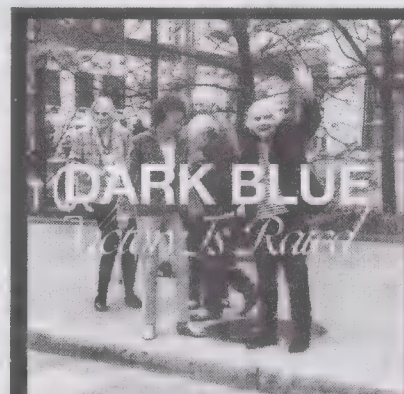
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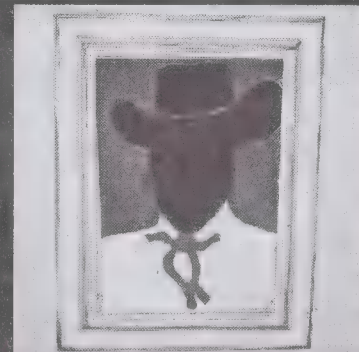
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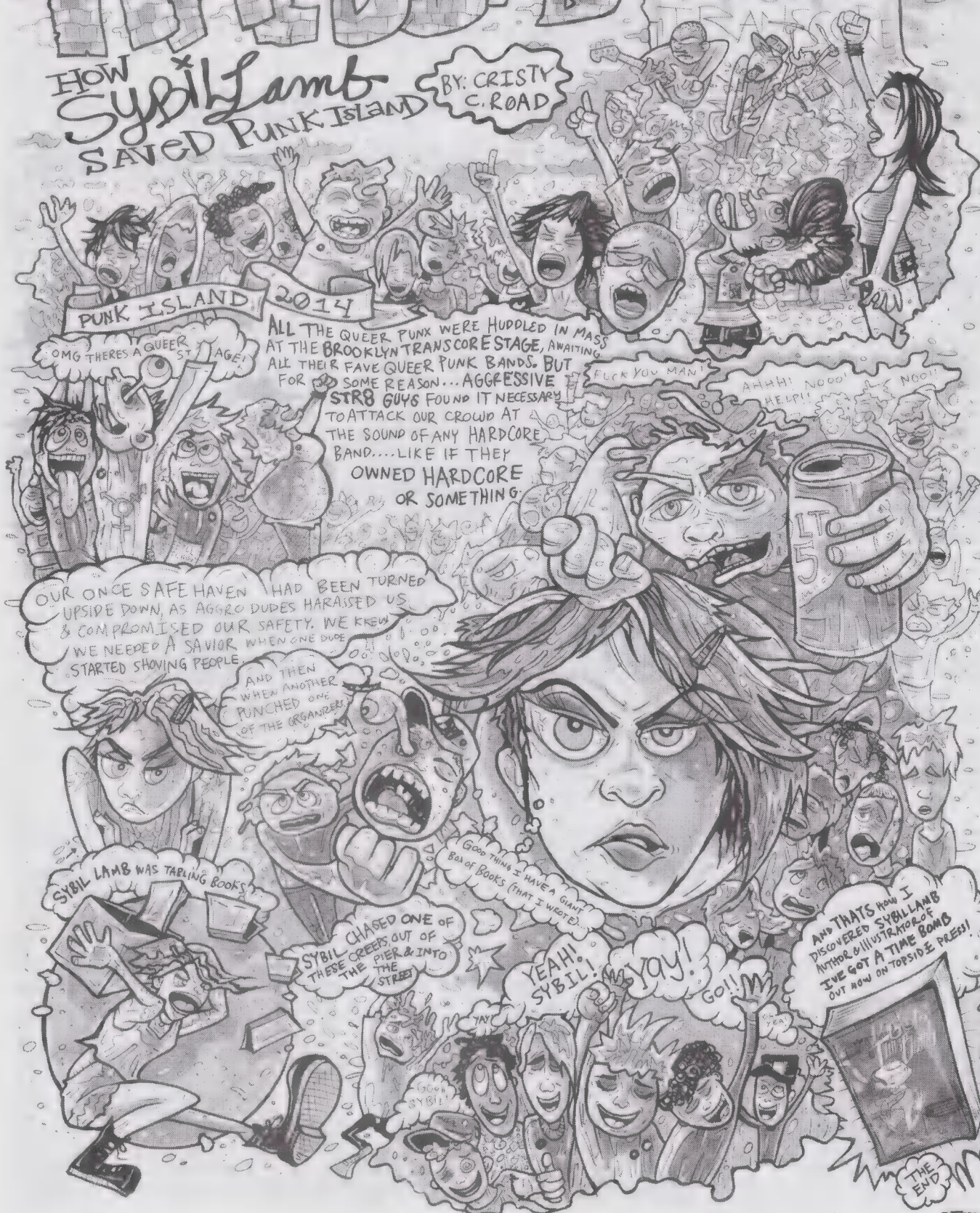
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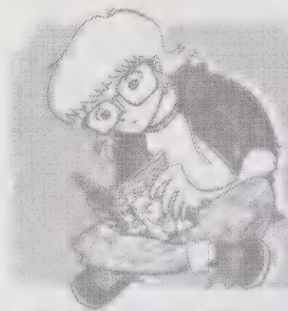
# TIME BOMB

HOW  
Sybil Lamb  
SAVED PUNK ISLAND

BY: CRISTY  
C. ROAD







## PUNK PARENTHOOD FOR THE SLEEP DEPRIVED

JENNIFER WHITEFORD

How much evil is too much to expose a first grader to while he's having his pancakes?

# You Say I Act Like Harry Potter, But You're Voldemort

Two nights ago, I finished putting my younger son to bed and went quickly up to my own bedroom where my husband David always reads to our six-year-old son Milo. I crawled into bed beside Milo and listened quietly while David read. Within a few minutes he read the final sentence of the thick novel he was holding.

"The scar had not pained Harry for nineteen years. All was well."

He shut the book.

For just over a year we've been working our way through the *Harry Potter* series. At first, I read chapters to Milo each night, but after a new school year required a modified bedtime routine, David took over as the reader. The books have completely captured Milo's imagination. He was Harry Potter for Halloween this year. He draws scenes from the books on the backs of restaurant

the *Harry Potter* books... popular? Like, do a lot of people know about them?" It was then that I showed him pictures of the amusement park. It can be so much fun to blow someone's mind.

Even if you've never read the *Harry Potter* books, I'm sure you can appreciate this phenomenon. Music fans experience this constantly. Remember when you met that friend who hadn't ever heard The Slits and you burned her a CD, knowing she'd love it? Remember when you gave your niece her first Ramones record and she showed up at your house the next time belting out "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker"? Remember when your friend Rakhi's older brother gave you that Replacements cassette he thought you should listen to instead of the Soul Asylum album you were playing non-stop on your walkman? Sometimes it is the best feeling in the world

into detail about how it basically touches everything in society? Do I explain why we try to generate less garbage without revealing the profoundly terrifying details of climate change? How much evil is too much evil to expose a first grader to while he's having his pancakes?

The thing about the *Harry Potter* series is the young characters can't escape the evils of the world. Harry is literally marked by evil in his infancy. Before they finish high school, he and his friends have watched peers and loved ones die—all while attempting to overthrow a powerful evil force and trying to convince unbelieving citizens there was an actual threat. Milo was unprepared for the tragedy of the later books in the series. He was incredulous every time someone in a book died. "Mom!" he whispered dramatically one night, coming into the room

## Sometimes it is the best feeling in the world to be the person who introduces someone you care about to something they've never heard of.

placemats if the waitstaff give him crayons. He spent his Christmas holiday building Hogwarts out of Lego.

When you're around children every day, it's easy to forget that they've only actually existed for a few years. Two nights ago Joey, our four-year-old, sighed deeply and said seriously, "I wish there were sharks in real life." Somehow he hadn't yet encountered convincing evidence that sharks exist. When it came to introducing *Harry Potter* to Milo, I felt the weight of the moment when we opened the first book. He'd never again not know this story, these characters, this world. He was about to become aware of an obsession that had united an unprecedented number of people. He had no idea what he was getting into. Somewhere in the middle of the second book he stopped me reading to ask, "Are

to be the person who introduces someone you care about to something they've never heard of.

There are other times, though, when I dread my children's unfolding consciousness. Sometimes it feels like I am constantly walking a fine line between wanting them to be aware enough to not be assholes but unaware enough to not be burdened by all of the evils of the world at once. I read the news every morning when I wake up and it used to be a decent way to begin a day. Now I can feel myself tensing up as soon as I scan the headlines. When David and I discuss Trump or his alarming Canadian imitators over breakfast, we don't quite know how much detail to offer when Milo appears and asks, "What are you talking about?" Can I tell him about racism and not yet go

where I was sitting with his sleeping brother, "Dumbledore died."

When these books were first published I was not yet a parent but I was an early childhood educator, working with kids aged six to ten. I can remember the fervor that surrounded the release of each new volume and the amount of time the kids I worked with spent discussing each new plot development. I remember walking home from a restaurant after dinner on the day when *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* was released. I passed a coffee shop and saw a group of girls wearing pointy witch hats seated in the window, each of them with a copy of the book on her lap, reading intently. I recognized a few of them from work. None of them looked up as I passed by. Nothing was going to distract them from that book. As a person who, in





BILL PINKEL

childhood, was constantly made fun of for reading too much, I thought it was one of the best things I'd ever seen.

I also remember the negative attention the books got, religious groups freaking out about the witchcraft and magic but also just regular people concerned that the books were "too dark" for kids. At the time I thoroughly scoffed. As if being a kid wasn't all kinds of scary. As if kids never ran into "darkness" in their regular lives. I'd watched the kids in my care deal with abuse, racism, poverty, and abandonment. Surely they could handle a story where an evil magical snake wizard tried to destroy a fictional world.

I still don't agree with people who feel these books are too much for kids, but now as a parent I can say that I at least get where they are coming from. As I become more and more aware of how things are going wrong in the world, I feel protective

of the innocence of my own children. And it is dark as hell to say this but I do worry sometimes that, if things keep getting worse, someday they'll want to know why I chose to bring them into this world.

More than a decade ago I interviewed Dan Yemin of Lifetime and Paint It Black fame for an article about punks who like to exercise. For some reason we also drifted into conversation about Al Gore's documentary about climate change, *An Inconvenient Truth*. I told Dan that it made me think twice about having kids, and he said things like that made him *more* interested in having kids, because we have to create people who can fight to make the world better. I never forgot that, and I let this idea guide me when I decided to have children. I am optimistic that my kids will be good people who improve the world. What I panic about is that it won't be enough. That things will be too damaged for them to

redeem, no matter how hard I work to raise them right.

In the final chapters of the *Harry Potter* series things are completely fucked. The government is depriving people of rights and liberties, families are separated, and a thoroughly evil man has taken charge. People who oppose his rule have no choice but to fight like hell. There are plenty of good, capable adults on the right side of things, but ultimately the fight comes down to the kids. Dark as it may be, I'm fine with my innocent six-year-old reading these stories. I want him to know not only that he's capable of fighting hard for what is right but also that he may have no choice but to do so if things get really bad. I just never expected this fiction to ring so alarmingly true.

—Jennifer Whiteford



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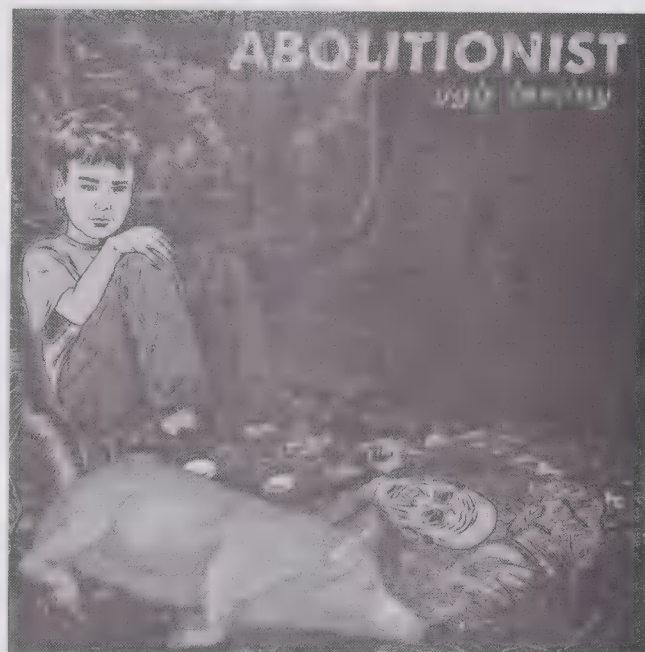
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# OUR LADY OF CACOPHONY

"MEET THE  
STUDENTS"  
A COMIC BY  
SOPHIA ZARDERS



LIKES: bad bitches, the bunny insta story filter, Rihanna, "best vines of all time" compilations  
DISLIKES: "ALL LIVES MATTER" motherfuckers, squares, nasey teachers, hoteps

PLANS AFTER GRADUATING:

"Uhhhh, which HBCU has the most clout???"

## DINAH

## DEL (DELILAH)

LIKES: shenanigans, skating videos, crushin' on strangers, pot  
DISLIKES: bad vibes, misogyny, seasonal depression  
PLANS AFTER GRADUATING: "Um idk, like, move to Portland and start a farm in the countryside or something. :)"

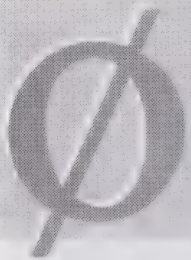


## JUDITH

LIKES: japanese candies, unapologetic black punx, queer graphic novels  
DISLIKES: normies, posers, racists

PLANS AFTER GRADUATING: "Probably a liberal arts college near the city, I just wanna get out of this town!"





# AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NORR

**Death to false  
pretenses  
created under  
false pretenses!**

## THE GREENEST SHOE ON EARTH?

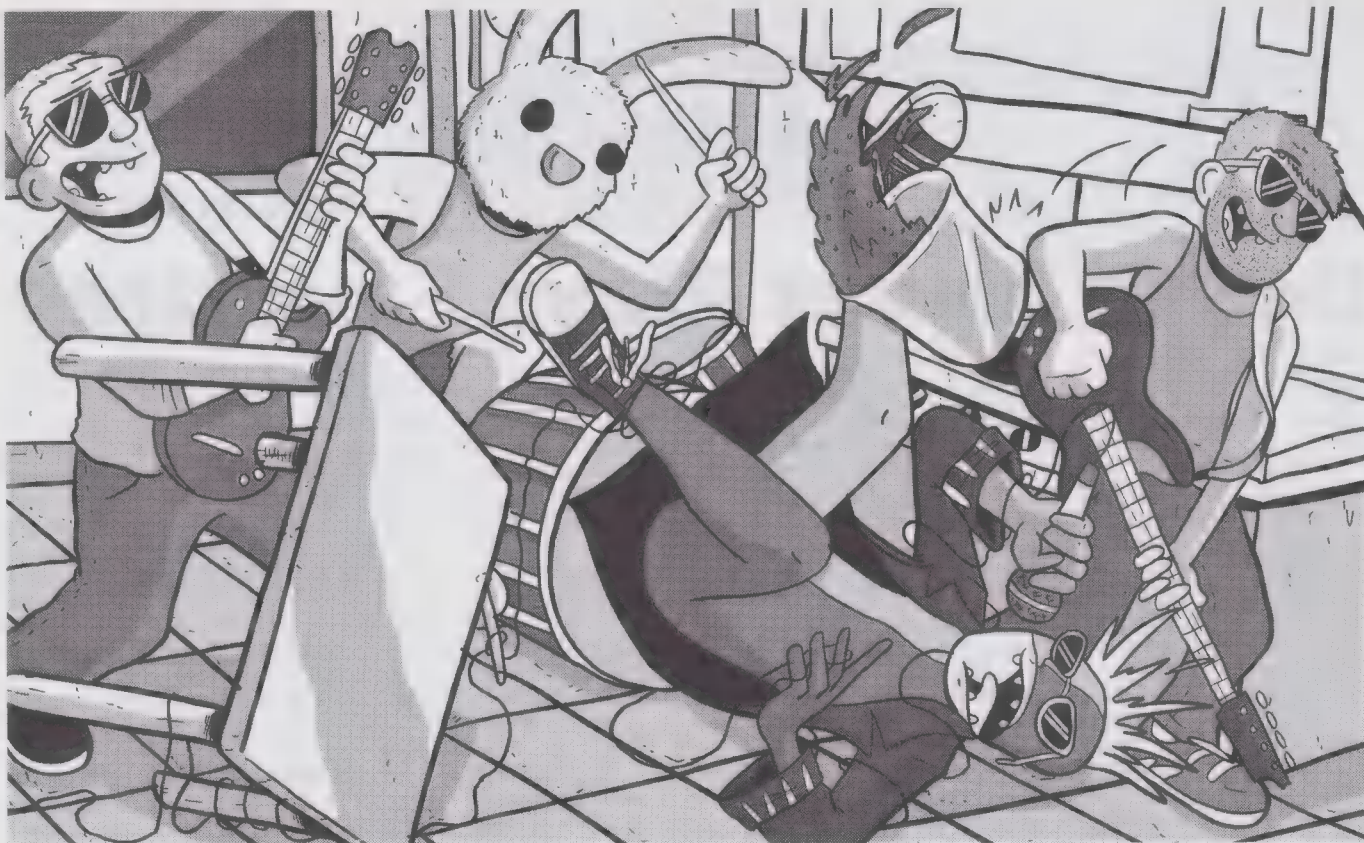
*I am flat on my back on the floor of the tiny kitchen of a tiny soup restaurant in the tiny town of Ephraim, Wis. (pop. 288), wearing a cowboy hat, a gun belt laden with two orange plastic pistols, and a half-green, half-black, full-body morphsuit. I have fallen backwards off the countertop while introducing a song called "My Cock's on Drugs," with the back of my head slicing thru the drummer's cymbals before my head and the rest of my body land in a crumpled heap on the floor. I am fifty-three years old.*

When I was a kid, there was a syndicated radio show on Sunday nights called *The King Biscuit Flower Hour*, which was typically an hour's worth of a band recorded live in concert. I was a fairly regular listener, because you could hear songs (and sometimes bands) you wouldn't ordinarily hear on the radio (case in point, it was the first place where I heard Devo). When I was about twelve or thirteen, I was just starting to get into the Rolling Stones. When the Stones appeared on the *King Biscuit Flower Hour* during their *Some Girls* tour in 1978, I taped it off the radio in the time-honored '70s kid tradition of setting my crappy little portable cassette recorder next to my crappy little transistor radio, pressing *record*, then trying to remain silent while the tape recorder recorded not only the music on the radio, but any ambient dog barks, door slams, screams, burps, or farts that might be audible in the background. I listened to my crappy homemade Rolling Stones live cassette *constantly*, until the whole shebang ultimately devolved into a hissy jumble of decomposed magnetic tape, plastic shards, and gummy label fragments. Nostalgia and the rock'n'roll wet dreams of a thirteen-year-old boy being what they are, as the years went on, I became reasonably obsessed with the show in question: I found out that it was recorded at the Will Rogers Auditorium in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 18, 1978. I also found out that the Will Rogers Auditorium had a seating capacity of "only" 2,856 people—cavernous to a punk band, but a far cry from the 50,000-seat stadiums the band was selling out at the time. I further discovered that, so as not to overly stampede the friendly confines of the Will Rogers Auditorium with an unending flow of *The Great Unwashed*, the Stones played this show under an assumed name: The London Green Shoed Cowboys (this clandestine show was not an isolated event; other pseudonyms employed by the Stones

during such gigs included "The Cockroaches" and "The Great Southeast Stoned Out Wrestling Champions"). Years later, my cassette long dead, I attempted to download the *King Biscuit Flower Hour* performance off the internet, succeeding in only infecting my (work!) computer with a virus that required a full reformatting of my hard drive. When a film of the performance was (briefly) released in theatres some thirty-odd years after the fact, I saw it (Jagger wears one of punk godmother Vivienne Westwood's DESTROY T-shirts onstage in it, à la Johnny Rotten on the *Never Mind The Bollocks* inner sleeve one year earlier); when the movie was released on Blu-ray, I bought it; when the soundtrack was released on vinyl, I was all over it. Even after forty years, my undying affection for the Rolling Stones July 18, 1978, Fort Worth show continued unabated. What *also* continued unabated was my admiration for the fact that these yo-yos played an incognito show under the name The London Green Shoed Cowboys. I know that, on the face of things, The Great Southeast Stoned Out Wrestling Champions is funnier; it's certainly more ridiculous. But *anybody* can think up some completely off the wall fake name like that; there's no challenge! *No art, man!* Any harebrained wiseass can spew out a stream of low-effort gobbledygook like "The Grand Poobah's Old-Tyme Rectum Wax and Sawdust Concern" or "Thrice-Baked Kumquat and The Tit Hair Arpeggios" or "Brine-Soaked Urinal Puck and the Gently Beheaded Lobsters"—I thought those up right here on the spot, and that's just based on stuff I have lying around my bedroom! But The London Green Shoed Cowboys—that's got *style!* That's got *panache!* *Élan!* *J'en sais pas!* *Pitcher la vache!* Of all the completely stupid things your band could call yourselves when you didn't want all that many people to figure out it was your band, The London Green Shoed Cowboys is pretty much the least stupid one there is. *Which means it's the most stupid of all!* Therefore, having experienced the Rolling Stones July 18, 1978 show in just about every way, shape, and form someone could have possibly experienced it (with the admittedly rather significant exception of actually, you know, having been there), I decided many years ago that the only thing left to do to consummate my still-moist adolescent adoration for this legendary-in-my-mind performance was, of course, to

someday be in a band who played an incognito show—somewhere, somehow—as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings* (look, you have your fantasies, and I'll have mine. *I KNOW IT'S A FUCKING STUPID FANTASY!* All my good fantasies got used up in my *Maximum Rocknroll* columns [and look where that got them!], sue me!) Of course, playing an incognito show as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings* is easier done than said when you're a punk band—it's pretty fucking simple to ask a promoter to just throw you on some random bill and list you as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings*, but *that doesn't count*. That's *cheating*. Plus, I mean, who's kidding who—half the time, most of us *might as well* bill ourselves as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings* for all the difference in attendance it would make. Most punk bands spend the majority of their careers virtually incognito anyway! Who knows, we might actually draw a couple extra people who show up on the off chance we really might be the Rolling Stones. So, yes, I have always dreamed of playing an incognito show as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings*; but *no*, I shan't countenance doing so under false pretenses. *Death to false pretenses created under false pretenses!* I demand to play an incognito show as *The Something Green-Shoed Somethings*, but I counter-demand that there be some at least reasonably viable reason for me doing so! Otherwise it's just a bunch of hooley, and *GOD HATES HOOEY*. Enter Boris The Sprinkler. My old pop punk band, long removed from our '90s heyday, has been getting together for one show a year in recent times; the equivalent of a high school class reunion but with people that you actually want to see again. We'd talked, largely idly, about recording a sixth and final album one day, as our last album came out about twenty years ago, and wasn't exactly our most shining hour. I figure that any band that makes it to album #5 is entitled to an album #6, and that more often than not, album #6 is better than album #5 (I base this statement largely on the example of Cheap Trick's great *One on One* album vs. their spotty *All Shook Up*, which is the largest known Rock Differential between sixth and fifth albums I can think of off the top of my head). In a seemingly unrelated matter, our drummer holds an annual two-hour music festival in his cozy soup restaurant every winter, called *Ephraim City Limits*—an event where the





STEVE THUESON | @STEVE\_THUESON

## So many stupid little ideas jammed together that it became ONE BIG HUGE SUPER TOTALLY AWESOME IDEA!

laws of decorum, common sense, and maximum occupancy are cavalierly disregarded for 120 minutes of largely unsupervised ruckus. *Wouldn't it be fun to play ECL one year? Wouldn't it be cool to record a new album? Wouldn't it be great if we could find a reason to play an incognito show as the Something Green-Shoed Somethings?* Suddenly, these concepts congealed like blobs of dry, discarded rubber cement rolling themselves together into one much mightier blob of dry, discarded rubber cement: *Why don't we record a new album that week, and play the new songs at Ephraim City Limits—under the highly derivative nom de plume of THE EPHRAIM GREEN-SHOED COWBOYS???* This was so many stupid little ideas jammed together that it became ONE BIG HUGE SUPER TOTALLY AWESOME IDEA! The soup shop holds maybe twenty-five people, thirty if you squish. Forty if you count people hanging around outside drinking and peeing off the back deck. If Boris were to play under our real name, there might conceivably be up to forty-three, even *forty-four* people there, and the facilities would

descend into anarchy under the pure crush of humanity! Plus who needs witnesses when we're playing totally new and largely accident-prone songs?? *MY LONG-HELD FANTASY OF PLAYING SOMEWHERE INCOGNITO AS THE SOMETHING GREEN-SHOED SOMETHINGS HAS A NON-ZERO AMOUNT OF FUNCTIONAL UTILITY! GAME ON!!!*

Living in my hometown as I do, I run into old classmates every so often. For whatever reason, they like to shake my hand, and tell me they admire me because I am—and here I quote—"living the dream." At first, I felt compelled to sort of put my hand on their shoulder, look them in the eye, and tell them, "Y'know I have a job and shit, don'tcha? That I don't make a living playing punk shows, writing for punk mags, or announcing roller derby? You get that, right?" I no longer descend to such antics. As I learned during my days as a pizza delivery guy, "customer perception is fact"—if the customer thinks it took thirty-one minutes for you to get them their pizza and you know it only took twenty-nine, they're right and you're wrong and you are to give

them their three-dollar discount regardless of the factual inaccuracies inherent in their claim. As far as I'm concerned, if your old classmates *think* you're living the dream, then, goddammit, **YOU ARE LIVING THAT DREAM**, and if the dream in question is to play a show as the Ephraim Green-Shoed Cowboys while standing on the countertop of a soup kitchen in the middle of nowhere, *you better damn well live it, buster! LIVE!!! THAT!!! FUCKING!!! DREAM!!!*

*I am flat on my back on the floor of the tiny kitchen of a tiny soup restaurant in the tiny town of Ephraim, Wisconsin (pop. 288), wearing a cowboy hat, a gun belt laden with two orange plastic pistols, and a half-green, half-black, full-body morphsuit. I have fallen backwards off the countertop while introducing a song called "My Cock's on Drugs," with the back of my head slicing thru the drummer's cymbals before my head and the rest of my body land in a crumpled heap on the floor. I am fifty-three years old. I AM LIVING THE DREAM.*

Love,  
—Norb





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DATE

Don't forget to tell  
your loved ones  
how much they  
mean to you.

# Death Never Plays Favorites

Mental health has been a private and public concern for as long as I can remember. However, as time goes by, it seems like this issue is getting more serious and worsening. I see it happening to those who haven't reached middle age. That's a problem. Maybe it's because these past years I've worked in healthcare, or maybe it's all the past years of being in and around bands and other types of artists. Maybe it's seeing people who seem to have everything in life right in front of them next to those who have next to nothing get affected the same dark way mentally. I don't know. What I do know is that some people are still having a difficult time getting the health put back in their mental health. There are two people, out of the many in this unfortunate situation, who instantly came to mind. These people are being kept anonymous out of love and respect to them and their families.

What's a heart-breaking downer is those who get so mentally beat down—and the desperation of simply trying to feel well overwhelms them—that the results become severe and they succumb to the ongoing battle of their own personal struggles. It's bad enough losing the people who have made a serious imprint on our lives to natural causes. Drug addiction and suicide are two ways of dying that have likely affected most, if not everyone, reading the pages of this magazine. All humans are susceptible to that uninvited chemistry of the brain, and as we all know, death never plays favorites.

When it does come up in conversation, I find it difficult to talk with someone who believes it's a conscious decision for someone to be a drug addict. Of course, there are people using and/or abusing street and prescription drugs by their own will, I get that. When your only readily available option to try and feel normal is to use what you can get your hands on, it's not only a serious issue, it's a dangerous one. Yet, there's always a reason why they're doing so, *why* they're using to fill some kind of a void, and it's not my fucking place to judge their reasons. Just because it's not my place to judge, doesn't mean I'll be a soft touch so someone can go cop or enable some other self-destructive behavior. On that same token, I can't fix anyone or solve their problems. I'm not a fucking doctor, but I can be one hundred percent present and have an honest exchange, even if it's mostly listening on my end.

No, it's *not* easy having these kinds of exchanges with people, especially those who you've loved for a good amount of your life,

let alone someone you've met only a couple of times. If you truly care about anything, people included, the difficulty in the process of dealing with what you care about should be par for the course. Good and bad, warts and all. It must be reiterated that this doesn't mean that I or anyone else should be an endless buffet for time vampires, because there's always going to be those who try to do so, troubled or not.

Back in issue 106, I touched a bit on the way some artists are mentally hard-wired, trying to understand some of the reasons why they are the way they are. It goes without saying some of the greatest artists of our time, music and otherwise, have often not been your standard variety professionals. It's not just some off-beat, quirky gene that a good number of these kinds of artists possess, it's a genuine mental situation happening that can go undiagnosed, often sending the afflicted person on an endless rollercoaster in their day-to-day life. Some are fortunate enough to have proper access to the support they need, like decent healthcare coverage that's often covered through their employer to address any physical or mental issues. This works out, in the long run, for many people who keep steady jobs or careers going, but stop and think about a lot of artists who live off the part time work they slog through, just so they can keep doing what they love.

Anyone who's spent enough time on the road knows how difficult and expensive it is to get adequate healthcare just for what they need regularly, like scheduled check-ups (for the small percentage who actually do), to when they get seriously dog shit sick or have a fairly serious emergency. That's just regular-life-situation types of doctor visits. It happens to everyone. Then there are those who might need some psychiatric support—moderate to crippling cases of depression, the different levels of bi-polar disorder, and those who suffer badly from schizophrenia. These cases require specialists, and whether you're a band member out on the asphalt highways on tour, or some unfortunate bastard who can't afford seeing a specialist because you simply can't afford it, that can become a serious issue.

There was a drummer back in the '80s, who was one of the greatest, gnarliest people to ever sit behind a drum kit. As I got to know him a bit, I learned just how incredible a musical prodigy this cat was. Not only was he a seriously killer drummer, but homeboy was also a notable bass player from hell and

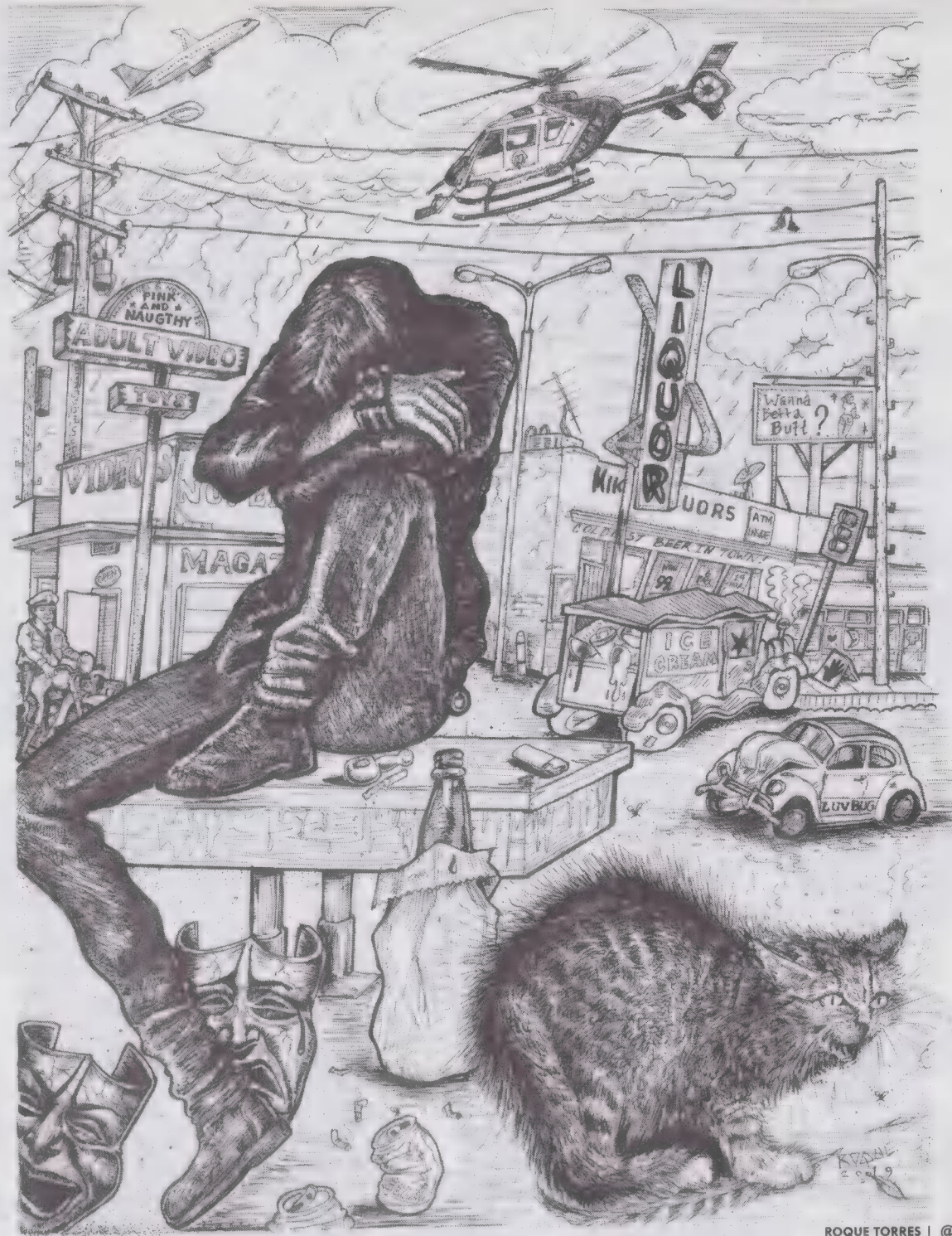
could also sit at a piano and write melodies like it was no one's business. When he'd talk about new songs he was working on, or even the songs my friend and I were ironing out, he always had tunes or arrangements kicking around in his head. His face always lit up when it came to talking about music.

The sad part was despite all of this talent, he was a full-blown heroin addict. He'd get clean for a little while, then disappear for a bit, only to come back around with a new wave of music he needed to get out of his head and onto a recording. When he passed away in 2005 from heart failure due to years of chasing the dragon, I can't say I wasn't surprised, but it was and is a major fucking bummer whenever I think about him. My bandmate who I met him through had grown up with him since they were kids in elementary school. It was soon after his passing I found out how he became such a steadfast heroin junkie from such an early age. He was molested by his grandfather for years, from the time he was just a little kid until he became a teenager, and it completely fucked up his mind. My sadness turned to fury, and then back to sadness again within a couple of deep breaths. Awful and a waste of talent as it was, it made complete sense why he was shooting dope all those years.

Now, not every single person who has had to endure the terrible infliction of sexual abuse in their life is going to become a heroin fiend like Johnny Thunders or Dee Dee Ramone, but there are a good enough amount of examples of sexual abuse I've encountered firsthand, which point to a likely possibility of substance abuse. There are those who can persevere and triumph through something as horrible as that, but then there are those who simply can't, and it's a damn shame. I can't help but think what would've happened had he not been taken advantage of as a kid, if his bastard grandfather would've keeled over dead before he could flex his sick muscles and destroy his grandson's life.

Besides the slippery slope of self-medicating due to the absence of licensed care, hopelessness can lead some people to suicide. It's easy to tell someone there's so much to live for, but when the person suffering simply can't see it, the hopeless state of mind can be overwhelming. Seeing someone you love fall into this pattern can be as scary as it is saddening. Problem is, a lot of the time people who fall into this state of mind can show no outside signs at all, leading others to believe that all is well as well as can be, that they're simply "going through some shit."





ROQUE TORRES | @ROQUEMTB

I once knew a guy I'll call James ■ long while back. He was trying to get a band going. I had met James through a mutual friend who had recommended me as a drummer. Soon after, I met up with James at a rehearsal studio to give things a test drive, along with some younger, needle-popping kid James brought along who thought he was the next Stiv Bators (he wasn't). After a few times giving it a go, we decided it wasn't gonna pan out, but I got to know James a bit better by hanging out every so often with mutual friends at shows and house parties. He was a funny dude, quiet but with a quick wit and a good musical head on his shoulders.

A few months later, I learned from his wife that he had purposely overdosed, leaving a note behind, trying to explain to her why he thrust a fat spoon of cooked-up garbage into his bloodstream. When James comes up in conversation, I can't help but think if I got to know him better, would things have turned out differently? Hardly a chance and it's highly unlikely, as I learned a little later on that he had tried to come to grips with this shit before. I would still have liked to have been there for him, just the same.

As when I see a lost cat, I can't help but think about how scared it might be, and how

the absence of the cat is upsetting those who love it, wondering where the hell it might be. I know it's just a saying, but like cats, I can only wish humans had nine lives as well. In the mean time, don't forget to tell your loved ones how much they mean to you.

And give the strays your undivided attention when at all possible, as well.

They just might remember you later for it.

—Designated Dale  
designateddale@yahoo.com





## Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

Neighborhood Brats



# RESIST!



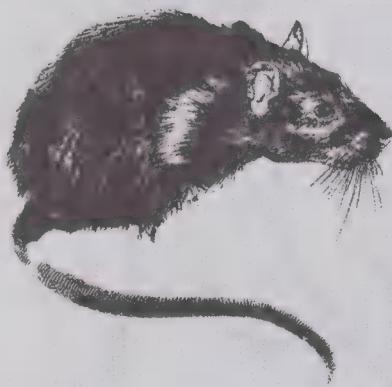
I BETTER HURRY UP AND FINISH EATING THIS, THERE'S HARDLY  
ANYTHING LEFT! SAD!!!



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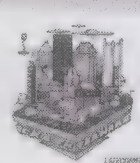
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**Dan Monick's Photo Page**  
F.O.S. Van Nuys, CA 6/17/13





# PURO PINCHE POETRY Y CUENTOS

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND EUGENIA NICOLE

around here you  
won't hear too many  
people say "look  
Mama I made it!"

## *Famous (Inspired by David Budbill)*

where I live is the heart of disaster  
where I live we're famous  
for bloods and crips not getting along  
for mothers separated from their kids  
and kids separated from their mothers

where I live baby fathers are sentenced 25 to life  
Mexicans live the tamale hustle  
Black people live the drug life  
and "Fig" is the way women  
and teen girls value themselves  
where I live bullets fly down the street  
like the speed of light  
with no name on it  
mothers find they kids in bags with yellow tape surrounding them  
and people watchin' like it's a show  
where I live you get robbed for anything you got  
swat teams ram into your house  
like a pursuit car crashed into your spot

we need help but  
how?  
when we're stuck in this obscurity  
where I live we are famous for that  
—De'Sonty Johnson

## *After (Inspired by Richard Jones)*

coming up from Hickory St.  
observing the narrow sky,  
the sunset fading  
blending from a bright yellow to a peach like an  
ice cream swirl  
I hear birds chirping,  
take in the beautiful scent of fresh garden  
then feel rough hands on my heart  
helicopters surround the blocks  
while I listen for police sirens  
capturing another criminal  
but this is how it works every day  
discrimination occurs too much now  
people of color are the only delinquents  
every second, every minute, every hour  
there is another life in danger  
gangbangers and criminals  
problems we need to defeat  
parents at home shedding tears  
when all we want is happiness  
but with a corrupt system how is that possible?  
—Anonymous

## *Where I'm from*

where I'm from,  
by age 12 you already know how to use a gun  
shots will be fired but people won't run,  
just shake their heads and tell an outsider "it's n'un"  
but as soon as the cops come...

I witnessed my own home get raided  
turn the corner you'll see young teens getting faded

around here you won't hear too many people  
say "look Mama I made it!"  
due dates and jail releases 90% more celebrated  
streetball and freeze tag, every block kid played it  
my parents fighting about affairs  
yeah, I hate it  
—Crystal

## *The Brightest Darkness*

after years of late nights  
spent curled under piled blankets  
I realized that there is no escaping it  
it shines brighter than anything I have ever known  
annihilating everything in its path  
chasing me into depressions  
tiring my being  
tiring my body  
and striking whenever it sees fit  
the flashbacks are its best move  
visions of my child body lying cold on the concrete  
as bullets and sirens rang above my head  
you have never run unless you've run from something  
that has no intention of stopping  
unless that something has made a home in your sadness  
—Cita

## *Shady '80s*

I'm from the land of shadiness  
from the crackheads to the gangbangers  
even the mail lady has some craziness  
gotta watch your back constantly  
from the dangers in my hood  
makes your head spin in wonder  
but life's still alllllll good  
you see, I'm alive  
I survived the dangers of my hood  
and from them cracks in the pavement  
a rose would not grow  
instead we had weeds  
and I ain't talking about trees  
momma say lock up or the Reds will show up  
unannounced  
and kick in your door  
—Sencay Hairston

## *Where I'm from*

I'm from Watts  
Every time I walk to the spot  
I see drugs, drive-bys,  
people getting robbed  
I smell weed and gun smoke,  
smells like burnt tires and burnt trees  
I taste them crunchy hot cheetos  
I touch gates, door knobs, and a speaker  
Where I'm from, there's liquor stores on  
every corner  
Guess they want us to kill ourselves for  
them  
Where I'm from you see dealers everywhere  
you go,  
doing what they gotta do  
to feed us kids  
—Katia Ocampo



*This issue's poetry was submitted by Watts Poets, a group of high school students from South Central Los Angeles who, with the help of their English teacher Bridget Valles, created a poetry class to help educate, empower, and inspire other students to find and express their voices through poetry. Their poetry reflects daily life in their neighborhood.*







# THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

Arena rock is  
about to be  
redefined.

## NO RUCKUS IS VALUELESS.

I will openly admit that sometimes I go out and pound out a Rhythm Chicken gig simply because I haven't played one in months and I need new ruckus to write about. In fact, I'm willing to bet if I didn't write this bi-monthly column there would be considerably fewer instances of public rhythm ruckus. Oh, I have a column deadline in one week? I better pull out the crappy drums and go make a scene somewhere weird just so I have something to write about. Some might say that such ruckus is not very authentic, not very organic, not very heartfelt, or just disingenuous. Heck, even I have thought that from time to time. I have learned recently, however, that NO RUCKUS IS VALUELESS.

This last November was winding down and I had a column deadline looming for *Razorcake* #108. I had no recent Chicken gigs that weren't already accounted for in this publication. I had to get quick with the ruckus simply to create material to write about. It wasn't exactly my most creative brainstorm that yielded the idea to play in my own basement and stream the live video on Facebook, but I got to toy with the concept of playing two separate *concerts* directly below my own living room in front of my wife, the one in-person audience member, before and after we watched a movie in the living room. I threw in some geographical facts about our basement floor being the same bedrock as the ledge from Niagara Falls (totally true). It wasn't my *most* artificially inspired ruckus, but I wouldn't call it *pure, all-natural, instinctual, gut-level chaos* either.

I have to admit, I feared that such forced ruckus could possibly cheapen this entire... uh... THING I'm doing. It was about twenty-four hours after that basement gig was transmitted out into cyberspace its unanticipated value became evident. A fellow named Jeremy from Milwaukee had seen the live bedrock'n'roll and decided he wanted to hire my... THING... for his upcoming event. Believe it or not, I get approached with requests to do my THING at all sorts of events. More often than not, I politely decline or simply ignore them. *This* request, however, could not be ignored. It was so bizarre and so out of left field. Those two stupid gigs in my basement instantly revealed their unexpected purpose. They were a type of bait for the surreal ruckus to come.

Jeremy, singer from Milwaukee early '90s hardcore group Damitol, is the creator and curator for an annual indoor motorcycle race called Flat Out Friday. I always knew Milwaukee (home of Harley Davidson) has an enormous motorcycle scene and this scene often intersects with the Milwaukee punk scene, but none of that ever really interested me. I was just more into biking, skateboarding, and drinking beer while learning to speak Polish. I really know next to nothing about motorcycles or the thick culture they belong to. This was a large indoor flat track race on the smooth concrete of an arena floor. I learned it isn't *official* until the track is glazed with Dr. Pepper syrup to give it that sweet, grippy friction. This whole scene is really foreign to me, so of course I wanted to play the gig!

There was a time when I used to tell people a Chicken gig would cost one case of Pabst; that was my going rate. Sometimes I would get stiffed. Sometimes I would get that case and a whole lot more. In the last decade, however, I've really had to turn down most ruckus requests because the soup gods don't allow me much free time. Jeremy's offer also had a guarantee dollar amount that made me blush. I have a weird, unspoken Chicken rule. When someone offers me an oddly large amount of money to do my THING, I always ask for some cheap beer to be thrown in. If they do not accept, well I don't have the time anyway. If they DO accept, well then it's Miller time! I told Jeremy the money amount was fine, but I also wanted a fifteen-pack of Blatz. He said it was no problem as long as I share it with him. Offer accepted. Chicken booked.

On a frigid February Friday, I closed up my soup shack for the day so Mrs. Hen and I could zoom down to Milwaukee. We stopped at our favorite Mexican restaurant for lunch, visited the friendly folks at Rushmore Records, and hit the beer hall at Lakefront Brewery for a quickie before the evening's motorcycle mayhem! I seriously had no idea what to expect, which is always a plus. We loaded in my crappy drum set and dirty chicken head at the arena loading dock like we were Mötley Crüe or Poison. This particular venue is now called the UWM Panther Arena, formerly known as the Mecca where the Milwaukee Bucks used to play. Arena rock is about to be redefined.

I actually never met Jeremy, but was greeted by his coordinating helper Joey (bassist for the Platinum Boys). Joey then passed me off to Greg (also a punk scene alumnus), who then introduced me to the three gentlemen assigned to me as my *crew*. I had my own *crew*. This event suddenly seemed like a much larger deal than what I was anticipating. In addition to Mrs. Hen, Andy Junk, our Polish friend Agnieszka and her friend John, and me, we had a friendly crew of three helpers. My ruckus militia was eight strong for this arena gig. I was getting paid well. The arena air was already thick with exhaust. This was no basement gig. God, I love Milwaukee.

### Dinghole Report #171: Arena Racetrack Ruckus!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #713 to #I honestly don't know!)

As I was being passed down from Jeremy to Joey to Greg and lastly to my crew, I kept inquiring as to the location and duration of my performance. Eventually, I came to understand the Rhythm Chicken and his crew had free reign to move his show anywhere within the arena which didn't interfere with the races and to play as much as I wanted. We were given plenty of beer. There were huge network television camera crews filming everything. I was supplied with the means and the freedom to really spike the evening's ruckus-meter into the red!

My ruckus militia and I started in the arena lobby where about one hundred folks were lined up at ticket windows to get in. That arena lobby was a most-deafening echo chamber before long! I unleashed the evening's first ruckus on the unsuspecting motorcycle enthusiasts before they even got to their seats! Some of them wildly hollered their approval. Some of them paid no attention. Some of them were annoyed. Some of them laughed and took photos. I pounded and pounded for a good five minutes until the engines inside began screaming around the track. The night had only just begun.

For the next five hours my militia and I brought the traveling ruckus circus to every nook and cranny in that arena. We played numerous gigs in the various food vendor areas below the bleachers. We played in many of the entrance gate tunnels to each seating





KAT WANISH

## A type of bait for the surreal ruckus to come.

section. We played on the first, second, and third seating levels. We played in the VIP section. We played down at trackside where the only thing between the Chicken and those screaming psycho-cycles was a short wall of hay bales! Every time we would pop up in a new stage within the arena, the spotlight operator would find it and illuminate the Chicken. It was almost like a live version of "Where's Waldo?" where thousands of attendees had to find where that demented Chicken would show up next!

It was definitely one of the Chicken's more surreal evenings. While following my crew from one gig to the next, Andy Junk informed me that this arena was the only location in Wisconsin where the Beatles ever played. Not a bad follow-up gig after playing in my own basement. We would play three or four gigs and then hide with the beer for a while. Later we hid out in the backstage area with nachos and whiskey.

We'd go play another four or five gigs in the food courts and between the bathrooms. Then we'd all hide with the beer in some stairwell. The ruckus and the fun found their way into every crevice we could find.

When the final race was done, we quickly hauled the Chicken circus back to the main lobby which was soon packed with everybody leaving. I set up directly in the middle of the crowd and pounded out my last chaotic rhythms of the event. The crowd went ape. My militia and I crashed in the corner with the remainder of our beer. Thousands of indoor flat track motorcycle race fans filed past us extending much thanks and thumbs ups. God, I love Milwaukee.

While resting afterwards in the lobby, I asked everyone in my roadie militia to recall exactly how many gigs we played. I keep a very documented and meticulous log of each and every Rhythm Chicken gig

ever played. In the two decades that I've been doing this THING I have never lost count or been unable to recount each and every gig of a particular "tour" until now. Mrs. Hen thinks it was maybe ten gigs. Andy Junk guessed it was fifteen. Some of my crew guys and I were guessing closer to twenty or twenty-two. I have decided on declaring there were eighteen gigs that night. Perhaps there will be some lost integrity in the science of my documentation archive, but the ruckus was indeed very authentic.

Mrs. Hen and I had a four-hour drive back up to Door County where I got ninety minutes of sleep before I had to open my soup shop. Flat Out Friday... was it all a dream? Three weeks later, the event was aired on the ABC Network on a Saturday afternoon. Lesson learned. No ruckus is valueless.

—Rhythm Chicken





## Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column

Chris Boarts Larson, [www.slugandletter.com](http://www.slugandletter.com) | [@slugandletter](https://twitter.com/slugandletter)







Avail at Twisted: 8/18, 8/19/1991



## Coming this summer: The Avail Reunion 2019

It's been over twenty years since I traveled and toured with Avail. If it wasn't for Avail, I might never have ended up in the band's hometown of Richmond, Va. It's been over a decade since Avail has played. Many have dreamed, plotted, and hoped to see them play again but it didn't seem likely.

Then, surprise—they announced a show in Richmond this summer in honor of twenty-one years since their album *Over the James*. The show was sold out within the first minute of online tickets sales—not by bots but legitimate humans who wanted so badly to see this show! A second show was planned and tickets for that sold out locally at the box office before they even went online. It's gonna be ■ hell of a weekend come July 19 and 20 in the RVA as those who got their tickets can relive the old days, while those who never got to see them will get their first live taste of the magic that is Avail. Needless to say, I love Avail and I'm just one of those who's stoked out of my mind!

—Chris Boarts Larson

[www.slugandlettuce.net](http://www.slugandlettuce.net)

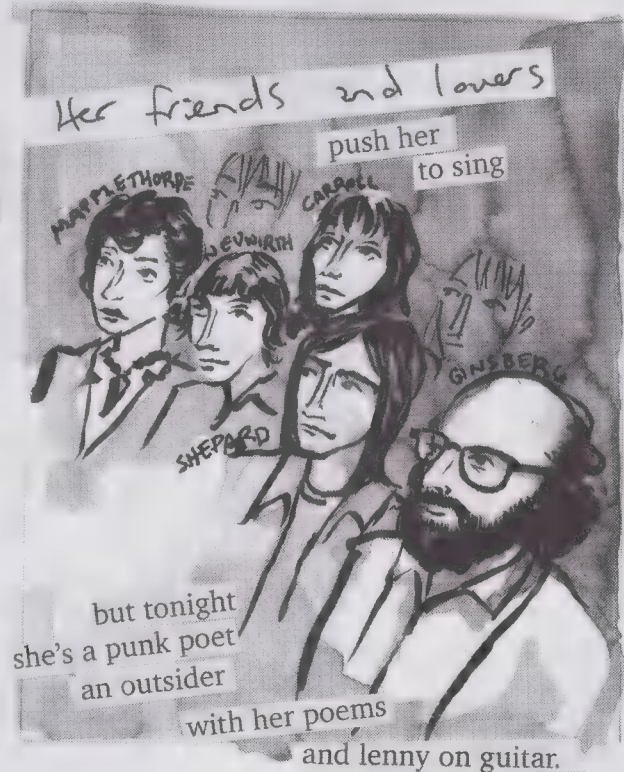
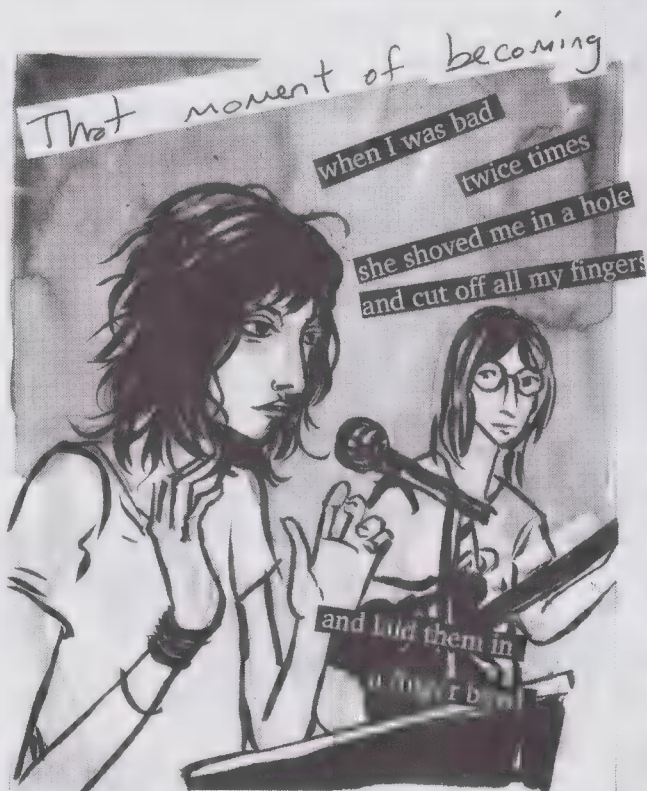
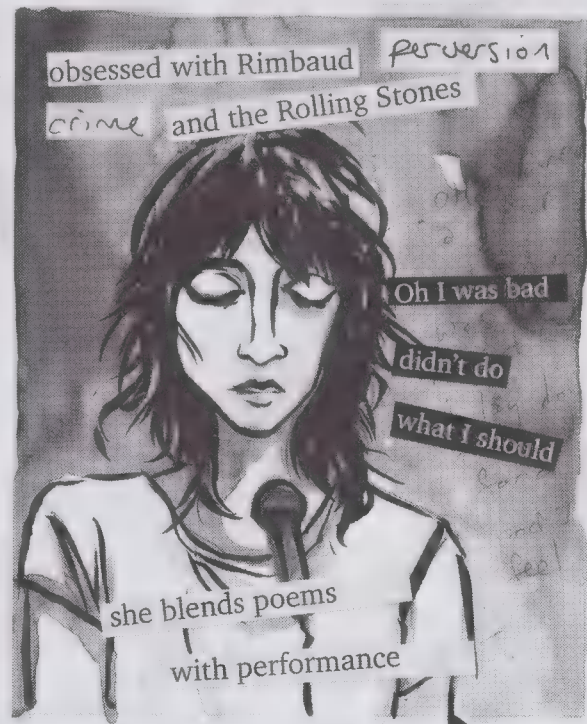
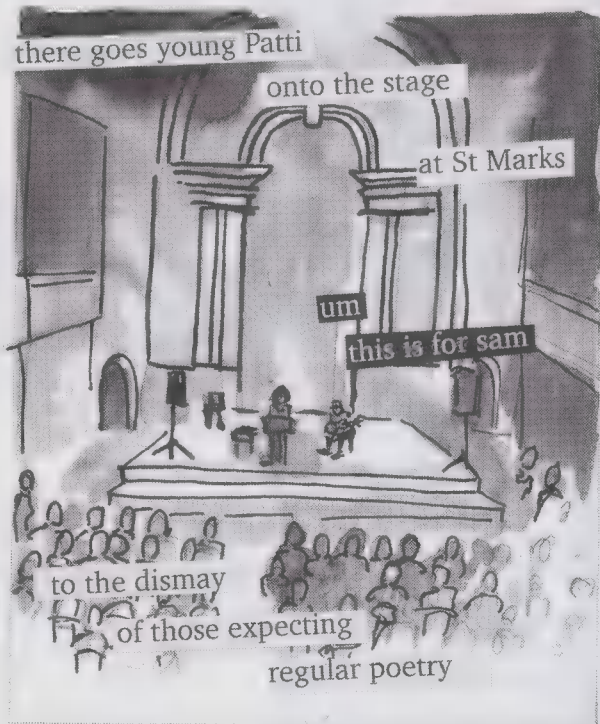
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# BALLAD OF A BAD BOY

By Jamaica Dyer





SLAKEPIT ALBUM SPOTLIGHT:

# FLYING MICROTONAL BANANA

BY  
**KING GIZZARD**  
AND THE  
**LIZARD WIZARD**

KING GIZZARD + THE LIZARD WIZARD IS A 7 PIECE AUSTRALIAN BAND THAT FORMED IN 2010

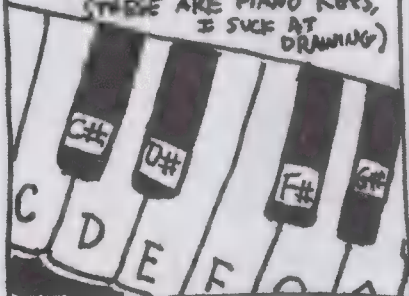


THEY HAVE RELEASED A SHITLOAD OF ALBUMS, BUT "FLYING MICROTONAL BANANA" IS MY FAVORITE

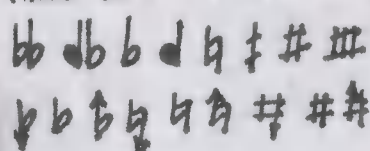


MOST ROCK MUSIC USES THE TRADITIONAL WESTERN 12-NOTE SCALE.

(THERE ARE PIANO KEYS, I SWEAR AT DRAWING)

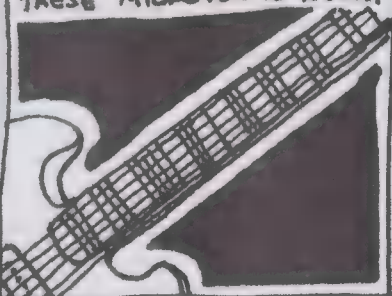


BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WEIRD, IN-BETWEEN NOTES THAT YOU HEAR IN INDIAN MUSIC? THOSE ARE CALLED "MICROTONES."



$-\frac{2}{3}$   $-\frac{1}{2}$   $-\frac{1}{3}$   $-\frac{1}{6}$   $\rightarrow$   
 $\leftarrow +\frac{1}{6}$   $+\frac{1}{3}$   $+\frac{1}{2}$   $+\frac{2}{3}$

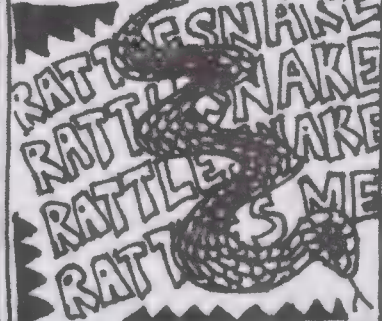
THE BAND BUILT SPECIAL GUITARS WITH DIFFERENT FRET PLACEMENT TO PLAY THESE MICROTONAL NOTES.



THEY WROTE THE ENTIRE ALBUM TO REVOLVE AROUND THESE NOTES, AND IT CAME OUT PRETTY AWESOME



THE FIRST SONG, "RATTLE SNAKE" WILL STICK IN YOUR HEAD FOR DAYS



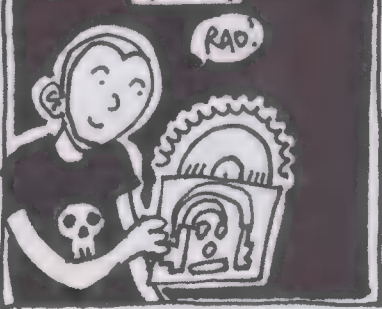
OTHER FAVORITE SONGS: THE ETHERAL, HAUNTED "SLEEP DRIFTER"; THE BOUNCY "OPEN WATER";



THE TWANGY WESTERN "BIKA BONG VALLEY" AND THE SPACY "NUCLEAR FUSION"



YOU CAN HEAR MOST OF THESE SONGS ON YOUTUBE, BUT I RECOMMEND THE RECORD ON NUCLEAR YELLOW VINYL.



THEY'RE COMING TO THE U.S. THIS YEAR, I'M STOKED!



BEN SNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM





# **One Punk's Guide to a Vegan Diet**

**by Todd Taylor**

**Illustrations by Laura Collins**

**Layout by Todd Taylor**



## The Slow Decay of the Day in Day

It happened gradually, at a rate so slow I didn't really notice it was happening. I gained weight. It happened over the course of a decade, due to working all the time and not paying too much attention to the food I ate. I wasn't feeling very good. I was a workaholic. I didn't exercise much. I walked. I skated. I got injured repeatedly. I just kept eating like when I was a kid.

Ten years ago, my health problems caught up with me. For the first time in my life, I had high cholesterol and high blood pressure. My skin and respiratory allergies were horrible. I was thirty pounds heavier than ten years before and was still gaining weight. I went to my doctor for a physical and she wanted to prescribe medication. I'd done a bit of research before my visit. Admittedly, it wasn't much. I'd read *The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss, and Long-Term Health* by T. Colin Campbell.

I like my doctor. She's no bullshit.

"Isn't it true that every single animal cell contains cholesterol—and all animal foods contain cholesterol, like meat, milk, and cheese?" I asked my doctor.

"Yes. Plant foods do not contain what's considered cholesterol."

"What if I stop eating those foods? Would that lower my cholesterol?"

She hesitated and let out a sigh. "Maybe a change in diet will help, but these pills are specifically designed to do just that."

"I'm worried about the side effects. I don't want to be on pills for the rest of my life. Give me six months and I'll do another blood test."

She sighed again. "You can try. Even if you eat a completely cholesterol-free diet, your body will still make cholesterol. We just need you to get into a healthy range."

I had been vegetarian for a short time during high school, but gave it up when I felt lightheaded and generally not great. Admittedly, I didn't change my diet much; I just didn't eat meat.

For the six months between physicals, I ate meat once a week. I was hooked on chicken burritos. I tried to remember to exercise—to exercise for exercise's sake, not just hauling boxes, getting laundry done, or walking to the video store, the library, and the local donuttery—but I was still working twelve to fourteen hours a day, six days a week.

Also at that time, although I knew, intellectually, I didn't want to cause harm to animals, I continued to eat them. I've never killed and plucked a chicken or slaughtered a hog, but I was an excellent barbequer. I wish I could honestly say I initially stopped eating meat due to mass slaughter, inhumane conditions, and the harm meat-eating is doing, to the point of changing the global environment, but that just isn't true. **I LIKED THE TASTE OF MEAT, CHEESE, AND DAIRY. THEY WERE CHEAP. THEY WERE READILY AVAILABLE IN THE WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD I LIVED IN.** They were a short walk away.

My dad, who is a master scrounger, helped me back into cycling. I'd largely given it up after college. Los Angeles is a dangerous place to cycle, even more so a decade ago. I slowly incorporated cycling into my day-to-day activities.

My return doctor visit six months later was deflating. I was hoping the conspicuous yet admittedly slight modifications in my diet would miraculously improve my health. They didn't.

"You have some improvement in your cholesterol and your blood pressure's a bit lower, but they're both still too high," my doctor reported. "High cholesterol can be caused by eating too much fat or carbohydrates."

My weight was within a pound or two of my previous visit, which was a bit sad because I was cycling and had made the fourteen-mile round trip on bike to the medical offices, something I wasn't sure I could have done six months before without resting after the hills or risking hyperventilation.

"Give me six more months. If I can't bring them down, I'll take the pills. I'm making changes."

She sighed and reluctantly agreed.

I'd read more about cholesterol, but didn't bring it up with my doctor. The body needs cholesterol and, when functioning correctly, it makes what it needs. Cholesterol helps with hormone production and keeps membranes in the body functioning correctly, including the stuff that insulates the brain's circuits. The highest concentration of cholesterol is in the brain. The cholesterol-lowering pills, statins, reduce the brain's natural ability to make the cholesterol molecules the brain needs. **PILLS DESIGNED TO TRICK THE BRAIN? OH, HELL NO, I DIDN'T NEED THAT IN MY LIFE. MY BRAIN'S TRICKY AS IT IS.**

## The Significant Weight and ~~Can~~ of Appearances

I then made the decision to make a clean break from meat and dairy, to cut it all out and see if it made a significant difference. I work better with self-made, well-defined parameters: "If you know it's not vegan, don't eat it." (Which is simpler to say than to do in practice, but it's good to have a goal.)

The six months after the clean break from meat and dairy were rough. I had meat fever dreams, watched BBQ competitions on television, and without the easy, delicious add-ons of cheese, milk, and eggs to dishes, I was initially at a bit of a loss as to what to eat. First was the process of removal of parts of foods I loved to eat: cheeseless pizza, burritos without meat, cream, and cheese. I ate a lot of pasta with only red sauce and held the crumbled sausage and parmesan.

**IT SLOWLY DAWNED ON ME THAT JUST BECAUSE I WASN'T EATING ANIMALS, IT WASN'T A DEFAULT TO HEALTHIER EATING.** Random food—let's be honest, snacks and junk like Oreos, Bac-Os, Ritz Crackers, and unfrosted Pop Tarts—had somehow slipped through the processed foods industrial machinery. They seemed vegan by accident. I ate them because I could, and because my food-brain was slowly rewiring. (Bac-Os are ridiculous and Oreos are delicious.) At a picnic, I didn't even think twice about ripping open some Tapatio Doritos, which, if I had just read the back of package, I would have known had milk in them.<sup>1</sup>

So that's one of the first things I learned. Turn the package around and read the ingredients, no matter how animal-free it logically seems. Yeah, Altoids mints have ground-up horse hooves in them, but so do Planter's dry roasted peanuts. They both contain gelatin.

It's a vegan minefield out there.

Goddamn it, the capsules used for a lot of pills—like vitamins, pain relievers, and supplements—aren't vegan.

Double goddamn it. Dear the United States, why are you so preoccupied with the appearance of things? Animal products are often used in food and drinks, purely for aesthetics. Many beers aren't vegan because they're filtered through dead fish—isinglass—to make them bright and clear.<sup>2</sup>

Triple goddamn it, some orange juice isn't vegan, depending on how it's sweetened. If it has sugar refined from sugarcane, there's a chance it's not. Bone char, derived from cows, is used in refining some (not all) sugarcane to make it bright white. Although not *in* the sugar, the sugar is processed through super-heated cow bones to make it bright white.<sup>3</sup> It's striking how often animal products are slipped into foods and food production solely to make them look more "appealing."

Quadruple goddamn it, bordering on what the fuck. I know they're not food, but not all vehicle tires, including bicycle tires, are vegan. Some are produced with animal-derived stearic acid, instead of using refined tree oil or vegetable and plant-based products in their manufacture.<sup>4</sup>

On the same tip of tracking the ingredients of what I'm about to eat, although it sucks a lot of the time, when at a new restaurant, I have

1 The milk apparently helps the powder stick to the chip.

2 Isinglass is a gelatin, the membrane of tropical fish bladders. It was introduced in the 19th Century when transparent glasses replaced stone and metal mugs and cloudy beer was thought to be bad or spoiled. These beers can now be clarified through Irish moss or seaweed.

3 The less-available alternative is sugar beets. Turbinado and muscovado sugars are good vegan alternatives, too.

4 Kenda, Specialized, Michelin, Bridgestone, Schwalbe, and Continental have said they are vegan. Goodyear, Pirelli, and Dunlop aren't. I couldn't find the source of the "refined tree oil." If it's palm oil, my partner Jennifer notes that's another problem because of the massive deforestation caused by palm oil plantations.



learned to ask specifically, "Is there any meat, cheese, or milk in it?" Then I'll say, "I've got allergies to dairy," instead of saying I'm vegan. It's surprising how many places don't know what's in their marinara and how much food comes to restaurants in pre-processed bags.

I also learned to not beat myself up if meat or dairy slipped through the cracks. I didn't run to the bathroom and stick my finger down my throat to purge the offending Tapatio chips or fortune cookie. I just made a mental note to be vigilant, not only in the grocery store and at restaurants, but at social gatherings. Accidents happen. I lived.

### Underused Pork Shoulders and Neon Tongues

Let me back up a bit. I know food is super hard-wired from our childhoods. My parents grew up in scarcity (my dad lived through the Battle of Britain as a child). Many foods developed during the late '30s/early '40s were specifically engineered to have a long shelf life, to be portable, if not precooked and pre-assembled. The goal was quantity—to feed lots of people. In wartime, Spam makes some

## My shift to a meatless diet was like one year-long, non-edited shot in an experimental film no one would want to watch.

sort of sense. Fruits and vegetables are perishable and spoil easily. They're difficult to transport. Advances were made in canning and pasteurization. Food vacuums were developed in containers so they hermetically sealed. (The pop of the top of a jar of spaghetti sauce, for example.) These are good things.

Yet, since WWII, these prepackaged, laboratory-developed foods have come to dominate the United States supermarket and have become what most consider "food." According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sixty-three percent of the calories in the Standard American Diet come from refined and processed foods.

To get heavy for a moment, engineered "foods" are part of food capitalism's colonization.<sup>5</sup> These "foods" have replaced the nutritious, real foods that they're based on, and they're almost all intentionally engineered with extra sugar, salt, fat, weird shit, or unpronounceable chemicals. Miniscule examples include Velveeta—originally advertised as a "nutritious health food"—now being labeled as "Pasteurized prepared cheese product"; and carmine, the red color in lipstick<sup>6</sup> and "strawberry" milkshakes being made from crushed-up beetles (70,000 insects per pound of dye).

With all the food package reading I've done over the past ten years, if the ingredients make sense and you don't need a degree in chemistry to understand what they are, it's probably okay to eat. (And, yes, there are some engineered vegan-friendly supplements like nutritional yeast that sound downright chemical-ly which I use regularly: "*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.")<sup>7</sup> It was and still is intimidating and destabilizing to relearn how to both eat and cook from the basics, by mixing individual ingredients. At times, it seemed like an unscalable wall or a minefield. Sometimes—to this day—I'm just fucking tired and hungry. I had to seriously rewire the urge to rip a packet open, plop some meat in a pan, smother it with cheese, maybe include a vegetable, and feed myself.

But the hard-wiring goes beyond my environment growing up. It's genetics. As infants, we all crave sugar in the form of mother's milk. We need salt so our muscles and nerves work. And bitterness—found in many vegetables—is a taste cue for a toxin. Our infant brains think we shouldn't eat them. There are studies that show how

5 All of you politically aware folks out there, if you're ever sitting in a fast food drive-thru, take a moment to reflect on how you're being colonized.

6 Again, I know, not a food

7 A single-celled organism grown on molasses and then harvested, washed, and dried with heat to kill it. Yeasts are members of the fungi family, like mushrooms.

manipulated the Standard American Diet has become, which taps into ancient brain stuff and deep-seated survival instincts. According to the Harvard Medical School, "some of the brain mechanisms involved in our pleasurable response to sugar and fat are the same as those involved in our response to opioid drugs like morphine and codeine."<sup>8</sup> It's not a mistake. It's by design and partially why I fucking love potato chips—you delicious, crunchy little devils—and have to watch myself around them. It's also why the United States is fighting Type 2 diabetes and obesity epidemics, especially in low-income, disadvantaged populations.<sup>9</sup>

**THERE IS ALSO AMPLE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WHICH STATES THAT TASTE BUDS CHANGE OVER TIME—AS QUICKLY AS WITHIN A FEW WEEKS—DEPENDING ON HOW DEEPLY YOU MODIFY YOUR DIET.**

Years back, I started by not taking sugar with my coffee and stopped habitually drinking soda. Now, I can't believe how sweet sodas are and rarely drink them straight, because that shit'll kill you. I usually have to cut the soda with whiskey.

Since we're talking tongues, my friend Noah Wolf said something to me one day that really stuck with me. We both love avocados, and he said, "What if how I tasted an avocado was different from how you did? How do we know? Humans have only one tongue. For some people, avocados may taste absolutely horrible." Valerie B. Duffy, professor of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Connecticut hasn't released the definitive paper on universal avocado taste, but through her research, "we know that some people live in a more 'pastel' taste world and others, a more 'neon' one." We taste the exact same things differently, with differing intensities—for some people, cilantro tastes strongly like soap—and our own taste can change with diet. That's fascinating to me.

### No Dancing Bears Are Allowed Across My Threshold

I vowed a life-long war against hippies when I was sixteen, but now I have to admit that I look forward to vegetables, legumes, beans, seeds, fruits, and grains being main dishes. I crave them. (I craved nuts so much I became allergic to them.)

My shift to a meatless diet was like one year-long, non-edited shot in an experimental film no one would want to watch. I ate bananas. I learned to squish water out of tofu, then marinate it to give it flavor. Spinach wilted in a pan with garlic. Time moved slowly and uninterestingly, until I found myself at the doctor's office twelve months after the initial bad news physical. She pulled up my blood work on her computer.

"So you totally stopped eating meat and dairy?"

"Yeah. Nothing the past six months."

"Your bad cholesterol dropped a lot." She showed me a chart that looked like the big dip of a roller coaster. "It's quite good. I'm still concerned about your weight and your triglycerides. Do you eat a lot of bread and white rice?"

"I do. I'm also ■ potato-eater."

"Cut back on refined carbohydrates—sugar, flour, cereals. Eat whole grain bread and brown rice in moderation."

"I've been riding my bike more."

"Keep it up. You're actually doing it. Not many people pull it off. See me in six months."

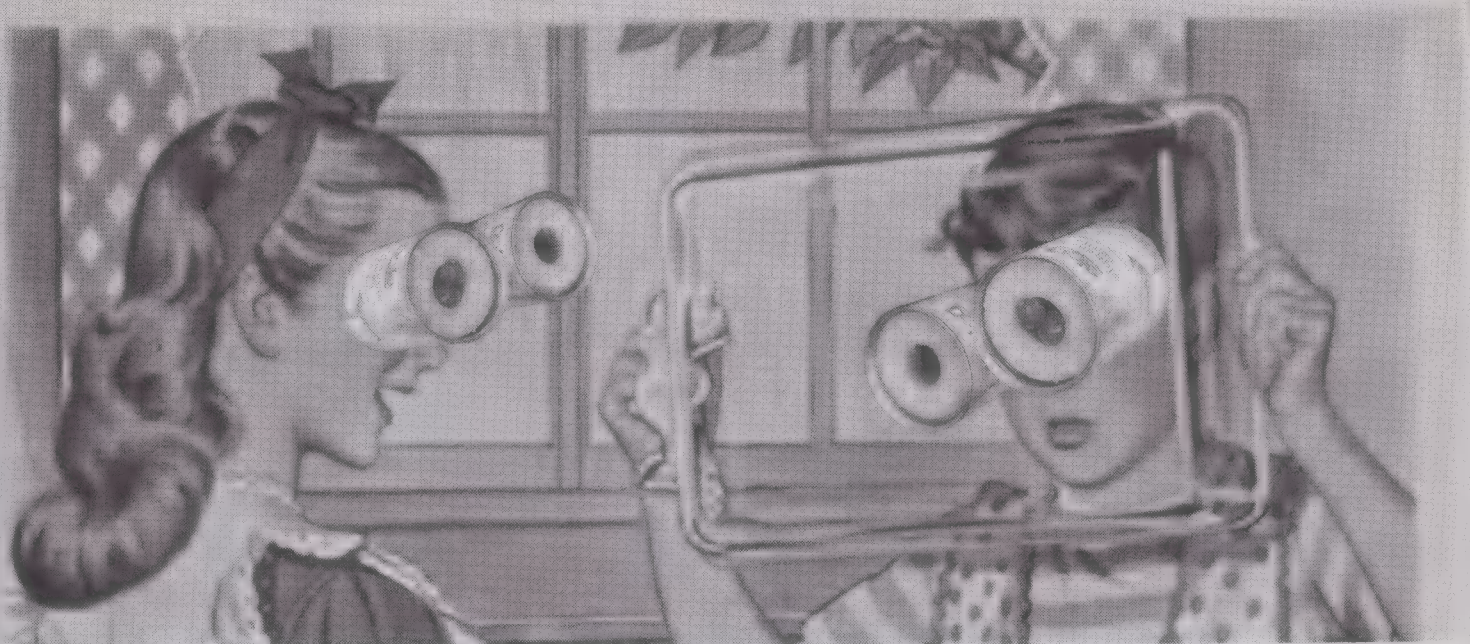
She noticeably didn't sigh.

Indulge me to widen the scope up a moment. I come from a school of thought in punk rock that rejects large, harmful corporations at any possible intersection. If I can't avoid them, I do my best to lessen my exposure and reliance on them. It's why I'm ■ member of ■ local credit union instead of ■ major bank. I've installed water cisterns, capture water from the gutters, and run a greywater system to water trees from the shower. Solar panels cut back on my reliance on the

8 [health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/controlling-what-and-how-much-we-eat](http://health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/controlling-what-and-how-much-we-eat)

9 According to the National Institute of Health, in 2011–2012, more than a third of the U.S. population was obese. Incidents of type 2 diabetes have doubled in children in the past two decades. The food environment has changed drastically to one with increased portions and limited access to healthy food choices.





power company. As I'm leery of big money in punk, I try to live as conscientiously as possible in other areas of my life. The more aware I became about the widespread violence to animals—especially factory farming—the more I continued to lessen my exposure to it. **IN THE PROCESS OF EATING HEALTHIER, MY RELIANCE ON BIG PHARMA ALSO LESSENE**D. Eighteen percent of America's national budget was spent on healthcare in 2017.<sup>10</sup> I am currently not on any medications.

There are undeniable direct links between health and the food we eat. Food is a big beast for a lot of people; it is for me and I learned that I didn't have to do everything at once, but build a foundation and go from there.

I know I'm a deeply weird person for a lot of reasons. One of them is I can eat the same thing for years without getting bored of it, barely thinking about it because I know it's good for me and I know what's in it. I find comfort in routine and take pride in making something the best I can through a long process of refinement.

Cultivating a taste for new food requires exposure. I had to try to make new things in the kitchen. I traded recipes with friends. I came across my favorite and most-referenced, still-heavily-used-today cookbook, the *Veganomicon*. I adopted the basic spirit of the movie *Forks over Knives*—adhering to a whole food, plant-based diet as much as I could, leading myself by the fork, by making food that tasted good to me.

Some non-vegan standbys weren't easily replaced, but others like oatmeal served as the foundation for more fruits in the morning with mix-ins of shredded coconut and sunflower butter.<sup>11</sup> I built up a pantry of staples—I love garbanzo beans and learned to make a double batch of hummus that was much better than store-bought and less than half the price.<sup>12</sup> I tried out new-to-me spices like cumin and coriander, and added them to my arsenal of chili flakes, paprika, and dill. I wood-shopped some "spice bleachers" in the kitchen so I could see all of the spices at a glance to keep my options open.

It's not all joy, but I still try to find the pleasure in both preparing and eating food. Part of it is ritual—like the difference between taking the time to enjoy a record spinning on the turntable versus swiping a selection on a glowing device.

I approached exercise in a similar way. I'm just not suited for a gym. I found what worked for me. I first explored my neighborhood by walking and then discovered the greater L.A. area by cycling through it.

10 [crfb.org/papers/american-health-care-health-spending-and-federal-budget](http://crfb.org/papers/american-health-care-health-spending-and-federal-budget)

11 Cut some apple or pear in at the beginning, plop it in the water, and poach it along with the oats with some cinnamon and cardamom. Delicious.

12 I also carve cucumber sharks and watermelon whales for special occasions.

Cutie pies!

## All Food Cops Are Bastards

Okay, so now a little bit about vegans. This is one of the times when it's totally cool to kill the messenger. I agree with the message, but there are some well-earned stigmas associated with vegans and their veganisms. There's no shortage of self-entitlement, clueless levels of privilege, and "kale will solve everything!"-isms that make vegans easy to hate and mock.<sup>13</sup>

A lot of vegans are fucking arrogant and classist. There's no shortage of terribly over-priced vegan restaurants in Los Angeles or pricey pre-packaged vegan options at the grocery store. I'm a cheap bastard and a hungry person. In good conscience, I can't spend ten dollars for a meager portion (fuck you dollar-coin "pancakes" and half-sized "open face" sandwiches), walk away hungry, and return visit to a restaurant. Fortunately, Los Angeles is lousy with non-bougie vegan options in unpretentious strip malls and modest storefronts—Mexican, Salvadoran, Peruvian, Thai, Indian, Chinese, Korean, Ethiopian, Mediterranean, and Sri Lankan joints—that don't necessarily advertise they're vegan or vegan-friendly but rock both ample portion size and reasonable price.

Eating a plant-based diet is often unfairly and incorrectly viewed as being an expensive lifestyle, limited to people with lots of money and access to grocery items only found in big city stores. This can be true if you're buying a lot of plant-based meat and cheese alternatives and processed foods. If staple food items like beans, grains, legumes, and produce are the center of your plate, they can be as cheap as any other diet. Dollar stores and international markets often have lots of these items available.

It is undeniable that I now have the privilege of having the time to make meals with my partner. We spend appreciable time shopping, chopping, cooking, washing dishes (and now gardening). It's no small time commitment. I realize it and am grateful we can do it together. Eating healthier on a budget would be harder if I had children or was fully responsible for someone else's well being, lived outside of biking distance to a decent grocery store, was still working twelve-hour days, or didn't have access to fresh fruits and vegetables year-round.<sup>14</sup> I

13 Kale's fine. It's easy to grow all year round here. On the converse, kale deniers, you're really getting huffy at a vegetable? Also, avocados are great. Toast is a proven technological variation of bread. But I call class war on avocado toast if it's over three dollars.

14 A food flip-flop has happened in the past two hundred years in the United States. Meat used to be consumed in small quantities because it was largely unaffordable and in the dominion of the upper class. What was originally considered peasant food—fruits, grains, vegetables, especially those grown without pesticides—are now treated like luxury items in many modern grocery stores.

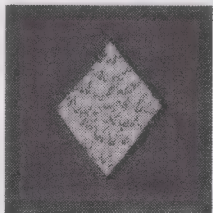




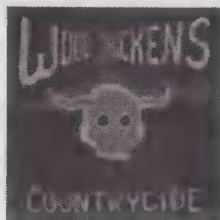
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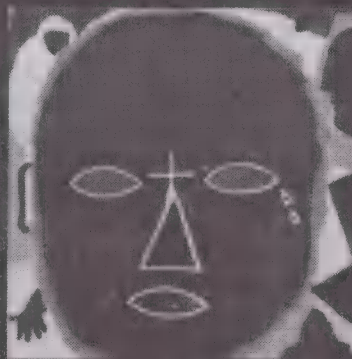
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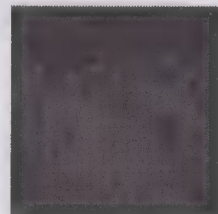
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recognize that, regionally, Los Angeles benefits from the San Joaquin Valley, "America's salad bowl."

Another thing I want to make clear is that controlling what I ate was a direct action for me to take control of my physical body. I don't feel a sense of superiority over those who make different dietary choices. I am in an ongoing process and don't know all the answers. I just know what's been working for me.

## There's a massive pro-meat bias in the U.S. and it's not by random chance.

I've also learned how strongly hard-wired food is in culture and how cultures engage with food can be wildly different. Food is not only something we need to sustain ourselves; it is also a powerful symbol that's tied into notions of gender, power, virility, emotional state, and status quo. (i.e.: "What's wrong with you? It's just meat. It's been eaten for centuries." "What are you? A pussy?" "It's not meat. It's chicken." "Tofu grows man boobs!"<sup>15</sup>) "Humans won the struggle for life over all the other beings on the planet. We get to eat meat! They'd eat us if they could." Stuff like that.)

The rest of my family is omnivores, so are many of my good friends. I eat at the same table as them. As vigilant as I am with my own intake, I have no compulsion to slap a slice of bacon out of their hands, talk down to them, or think less of them because they're making different dietary choices than I am.

If asked, I do recommend easily swappable substitutes for dairy butter (Melt and Earth Balance), animal milk (soy, flax, almond), and vegan-friendly seasonings and shortcuts (Braggs Liquid Aminos, Better Than Bouillon vegetable base) and share recipes for stuff like pancakes where they're hard-pressed to tell they're vegan after they've eaten them.

15 [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20378106](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20378106) Soy is such a misunderstood bean and rats are not humans. According to the study titled *Soybean isoflavone exposure does not have feminizing effects on men: a critical examination of the clinical evidence*: "In contrast to the results of some rodent studies, findings from a recently published metaanalysis and subsequently published studies show that neither isoflavone supplements nor isoflavone-rich soy affect total or free testosterone (T) levels."

## The United States, the Land of Meat Reverence

There's a massive pro-meat bias in the U.S. and it's not by random chance. It truly saddens me that yesterday I walked through the shadow of a billboard in my neighborhood advertising a three dollar fast food value meal. I totally get why people eat there, often blocking traffic with the backup from the drive-thru. It's fucking cheap. Well, today it's a financial bargain. It's also inexpensive to buy because **THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZES THE MEAT AND DAIRY INDUSTRIES \$38 BILLION ANNUALLY, WHILE SUBSIDIZING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES WITH \$17 MILLION (.04% OF MEAT AND DAIRY).**<sup>16</sup>

The meat-and-dairy industrial complex in the U.S. dominates the food production landscape. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average American adult consumed an all-time high of 222 pounds of red meat and poultry in 2018,<sup>17</sup> and 276 pounds of dairy in 2012 (which includes 199 pounds of fluid milk). The popularity of butter and cheese has never been higher.<sup>18</sup>

In comparison, people in the United States consumed an average of 115.4 pounds of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables per person in 2015. (Including 48.3 pounds per person of potatoes (mostly as French fries) and 28.3 pounds of tomatoes in 2015 (mostly as pizza sauce (and technically a fruit, but it's included as a vegetable in their graphs.))<sup>19</sup> Factory farming is leagues away from truly independent farmers or small communities raising animals for meat and milk, from hunters who eat what they kill, and people who live off of the land the world over. It's a completely different scale and proportion.

## The Smoke of Nutrition

"Nutrition" is a complex set of variables. Beyond food, nutrition is affected by environment, metabolism, and genes. The science behind the links between nutrition and health is contentious; and the field of "nutrition" is full of often contradictory claims. It's dizzying trying to figure out who to trust. And then there's the fact that healthy people die unexpectedly all the time for no diagnosable reason, which [16.medium.com/@laletur/should-governments-subsidy-the-meat-and-dairy-industries-6ce59e68d26](https://medium.com/@laletur/should-governments-subsidy-the-meat-and-dairy-industries-6ce59e68d26)  
[17.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-02/have-a-meaty-new-year-americans-will-eat-record-amount-in-2018](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-02/have-a-meaty-new-year-americans-will-eat-record-amount-in-2018)  
[18.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2014/june/trends-in-us-per-capita-consumption-of-dairy-products-1970-2012](https://ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2014/june/trends-in-us-per-capita-consumption-of-dairy-products-1970-2012)  
[19.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-availability-and-consumption/](https://ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-availability-and-consumption/) In other words, taking pizza sauce and French fries out of the equation, people in the United States eat almost thirteen times more meat and dairy than fresh fruits and vegetables a year.

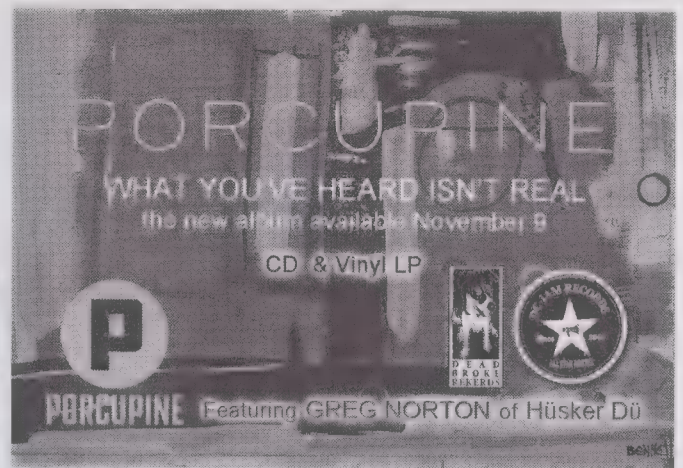


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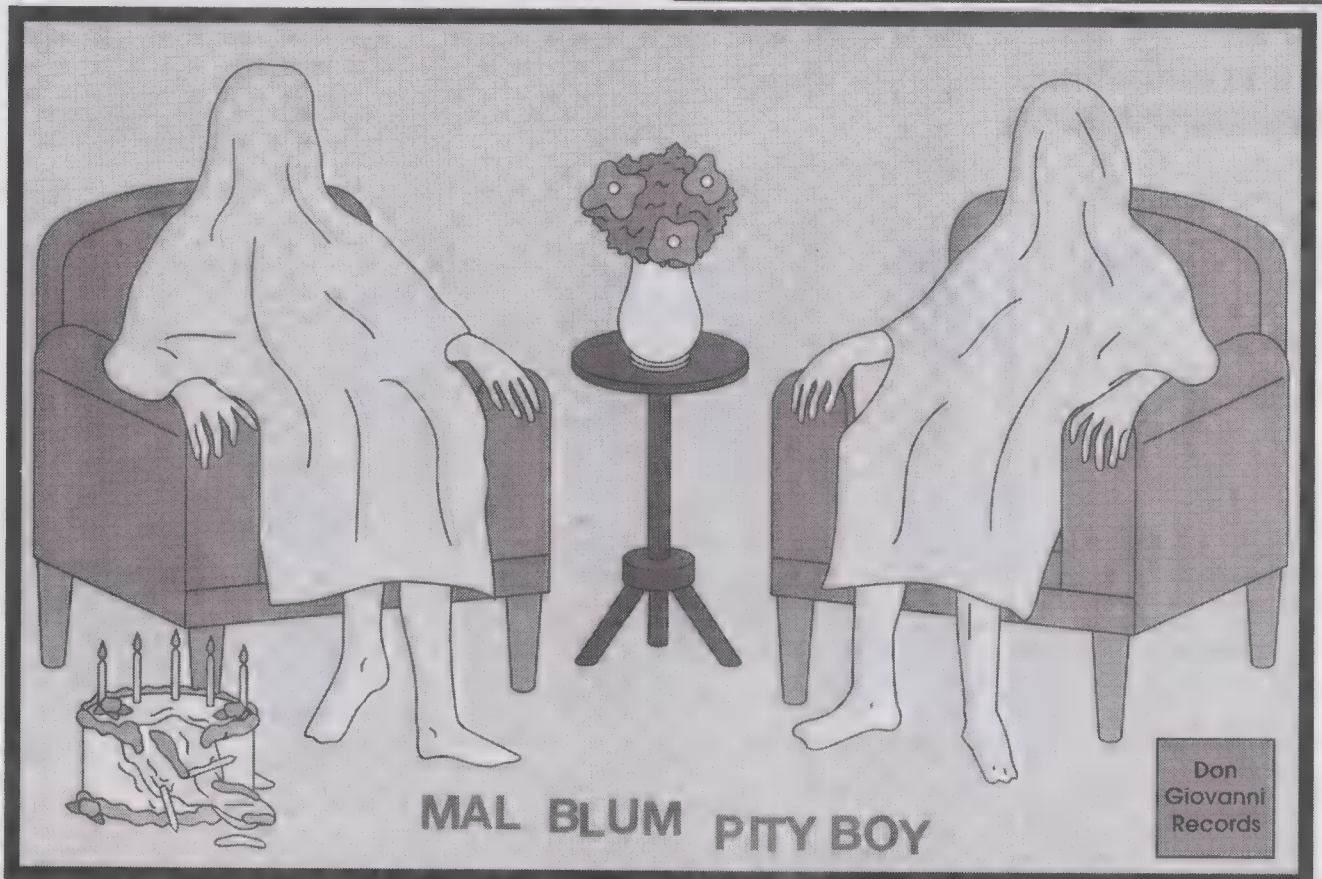


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## THE TIME SELLERS







chucks a “Fuck it, eat anything. What does it matter?” wrench into the whole works.<sup>20</sup>

That said, it is entirely possible to be totally healthy, fit, and vegan. Just ask Olympian Carl Lewis, sixty-two-year old power lifter Rocky Leudeker, or Cro-Mags’ singer John Joseph, a five-time Ironman triathlete. So let’s dispel some myths.

No one gives a flying fig about your protein intake until they find out you’re vegan. I appreciate the concern. The body doesn’t store protein, so it’s important to ingest it regularly. And, yes, animal-based proteins are more similar to humans’ and are used by our bodies more readily than plant proteins. Got it, but this is where I push back.

Somewhere in the slide carousels in our culture’s brain, the word “meat” got transposed over “protein.” They are not synonymous. I learned this from my buddy Derek Whipple. A fifteen-ounce can of black beans has plenty of protein: 24.5 grams, almost half of the recommended daily forty-six to fifty-six grams.

Protein is a nutrient, not food. Proteins are made from nine essential amino acids. If you’re committed to a diverse diet—nuts, seeds, beans—instead of onion rings and French fries—it’s totally obtainable. The only single amino acid found solely in a handful of plants is B12<sup>21</sup>, which is easy to get as a vegan supplement. I’m grateful to live in Southern California. I get my vitamin D from being outside so much. Plants pack more nutrients—and fiber, minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, and phytochemicals<sup>22</sup>—into fewer calories and less saturated fat than meat.<sup>23</sup> With no cholesterol. And fiber is only found in plant foods. Who doesn’t feel better when pooping’s easy?

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the majority of processed meat consumed in the world is carcinogenic and presents a risk of stroke, heart disease, and even some forms of cancer, especially colorectal cancer.<sup>24</sup> We’re talking hamburgers, hot dogs,

20 Douglas Adams, the author of *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* died at forty-nine of a heart attack as he was resting after working out.

21 [baltimorepostexaminer.com/carnivores-need-vitamin-b12-supplements/2013/10/30](http://baltimorepostexaminer.com/carnivores-need-vitamin-b12-supplements/2013/10/30) B12 is made by microbes. It is an important enzyme that facilitates two reactions that affect every cell in human bodies and produces substances essential for normal body function. Some early humans weren’t B12 deficient because they used human shit as manure, their water wasn’t chlorinated, or they didn’t wash after pooping. (But diseases like cholera were rampant.) The best way to increase the amount of B12 absorbed is to increase the amount of free B12 available. The most effective way to do this is to take B12 supplements. No matter how much steak you eat the body will only absorb a very small amount of B12 at a time, about 1.5 to 2 millionth of a gram every four to six hours.

22 Phytochemicals are chemical compounds produced by plants, generally to help them thrive or thwart competitors, predators, or pathogens.

23 Saturated fats are solids at room temp.

24 [iacr.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2015/pdfs/pr240\\_E.pdf](http://iacr.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2015/pdfs/pr240_E.pdf)

pork, beef, and chicken. Processed meat goes through an industrialized supply chain from slaughter to your plate. More often than not—and increasing in regularity—hitching a ride in the meat are additional hormones and antibiotics, as well as bacteria and parasites.<sup>25</sup>

The long-term health consequences—which were accumulating in me a decade ago—and hidden costs are anything but affordable, from medical costs to not being able to work because I was sick. Backed by a conclusion from *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, if you eat a lot of meat for protein, the chances of developing heart problems increase. The more plants you eat for protein—especially substituting plants for processed red meat—those heart risks go down. The source of protein is important.<sup>26</sup> I’ve done my body some good by eating more of my protein from the ground, from plants.

### The World’s Been Put on Fire to Feed Us

I’ve almost always felt insignificant and have had resistance to joining groups, but I felt that if I was to be part of something larger, I wanted it to be for good. When I ate meat, I used to joke I’d have no problem killing a pig or a cow with a hammer so I could eat a pepperoni pizza, a sizzling sausage, or a choice steak. The older I get, I’ve become more conscientious of not wanting to cause harm to others, and that now includes animals. I want to be in league with humans who believe overwhelming scientific evidence that the greenhouse effect is fucking up the planet and making it uninhabitable for all living beings unless drastic measures are taken. The clock’s ticking fast. Yeah, yeah, this is super-big picture and we’re only tiny drops in a vast and mighty ocean, but the food we put on our plates is a mirror to what’s happening to the planet. There’s a direct correlation.

According to the UN<sup>27</sup>, raising and killing animals for food is the number one cause of greenhouse gas emissions. (It’s 18% of all emissions, ahead of all internal combustion transportation.) Over nine billion land animals are eaten each year by U.S. consumers alone, 99% of which are raised on factory farms. Nearly 30% of earth’s ice-free surface is devoted to livestock production (as opposed to only 8% devoted to crops consumed directly by people).<sup>28</sup>

25 The 2006 spinach and 2018 Romaine lettuce *E. coli* outbreaks were both traced to cattle feedlots (either on leased land or via an adjacent canal.) (cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2007/03/fda-releases-final-report-spinach-e-coli-outbreak, foodsafetynews.com/2018/11/fda-says-shipping-records-definitely-hampered-romaine-e-coli-investigation/)

26 [jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2540540](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2540540)

27 [fao.org/docrep/018/i3437e/i3437e.pdf](http://fao.org/docrep/018/i3437e/i3437e.pdf)

28 [news.stanford.edu/news/2010/march/livestock-revolution-environment-031610.html](http://news.stanford.edu/news/2010/march/livestock-revolution-environment-031610.html)



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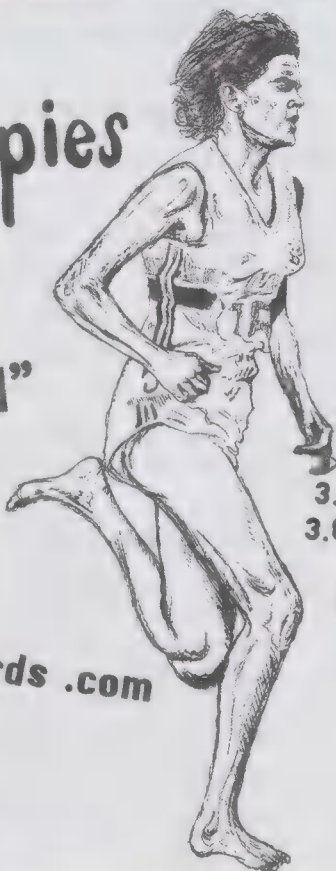
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America's two biggest crops—soy and corn—are not primarily grown for human consumption, but for animal feed and fuel. A mere tenth of the food livestock eat gets turned into food we can eat. “Converting grass into [meat] is like converting coal to energy,” lead researcher Joseph Poore from the University of Oxford reported. “It comes with an immense cost in emissions.”<sup>29</sup> The whole livestock production system is so horribly inefficient and unsustainable that it’s jeopardizing the planet. Visualize a country where meat took a back seat on plates. 800 million people could be fed with the grain currently fed to livestock in the U.S.

## 800 million people could be fed with the grain currently fed to livestock in the U.S.

The counter argument to foregrounding a plant-based diet and sunseting the dominance of meat and dairy comes from The Meat Institute. People in the United States spend less than any other developed nation in the world on food.<sup>30</sup> As I’m writing this, the neighbors are grilling skirt steak, feeding themselves a filling meal with a cheap bag of spice-filled beef. The fragrant smoke coming through the window makes me think of the distant, cumulative harm that’s caused by getting that meat to that grill. It’s a catastrophe that’s just out of immediate sight because it’s so big and all around us, but hasn’t obviously crashed quite yet. I admit—the severity of the situation juxtaposed to an ordinary urban-working-class front yard barbecue is a strong source of cognitive dissonance. Is it from the sole perspective of privilege to not only think about the future, but to plan for it and act accordingly for myself? I’m not sure. Ten years ago, I was in their position—literally in front of a grill—and I’m not sure if I would listen to me.

### Boring Things Are Often the Most Effective (They’re Just Not Photogenic)

*“The recovery of the people is tied to recovery of food, since food itself is medicine.” —Winona LaDuke*

We all need food to survive. We can’t opt out of it. Food is so tied into survival that talking about it is like talking about a religious or political belief system.

It’s not easy to determine with certainty how many vegans are out there, but in the U.S., best guesses are that about 1% to 1.5%

of the adult population identify as such, a small number compared to the roughly 88% percent who consider themselves omnivorous/carnivorous.<sup>31</sup> Vegans are a strict minority.

I’m fully aware that a plant-based diet itself isn’t a magic bullet to health, weight loss, and enlightenment. I’m a fucking horrible cheerleader, and let’s just say that I get a little “short” with Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons because part of their core mission is an ongoing effort to convert people who largely don’t give a shit about what they’re trying to sell. I don’t want to be that type of person. To me, veganism isn’t a contest against other people. It isn’t a popularity contest for who’s the most vegan. It’s not a cult I care to join. It isn’t a bat I wield in judgment against non-vegans. It’s a personal path I believe in. It is a component which is helping provide me with two things I highly value: the healthiest body and mind I can get—and in the long term, for pennies on the dollar.

I’m fortunate. Although I have health challenges unrelated to diet and exercise, **MY YEARLY PHYSICALS WITH MY DOCTOR HAVE BECOME ROUTINE. WE NO LONGER HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CHOLESTEROL OR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE BECAUSE THEY’RE NOT NEEDED.**

After ten years, I’ve lost and kept off more than thirty pounds. It hasn’t been from a “diet,” but by fundamentally changing what I eat day in, day out and how I approach food. My body moves much more easily and my legs no longer chafe. I get sick less often. At forty-seven, I’m in much better shape than when I was thirty-seven. That feels good.

As you age, it’s a hard transition from the time when the rental on your body becomes ownership. It’s a lifetime commitment. Here’s the advice I give myself: Balance and moderation in food (Oreos, potato chips, and whiskey on special occasions. Minimize the junk.). Exercise regularly and break a sweat doing it. Don’t be too hard on yourself, but don’t give in. You can change, little by little, how you interact with the world, every time you make a decision of what to eat.

### Helpful resources if you’re interested in exploring a plant-based diet

#### Websites

- [nutritionfacts.org](http://nutritionfacts.org) (tons of helpful videos)
- [veganhealth.org](http://veganhealth.org) (helpful tips for new vegans)
- [vitacost.org](http://vitacost.org) (good, affordable mailorder in the United States with tons of vegan options)

#### Documentaries

- *Forks over Knives* (Grounded in the evidence uncovered by the world’s largest study of diet, *The China Study*, a convincing film about adopting a plant-based diet for overall health.)

- *What the Health* (focuses on the health issues that come with an omnivorous diet that are less prominent in plant-based diets)
- *Cowspiracy* (ponders the environmental and sustainability issues that come from animal agriculture)

#### Cookbook

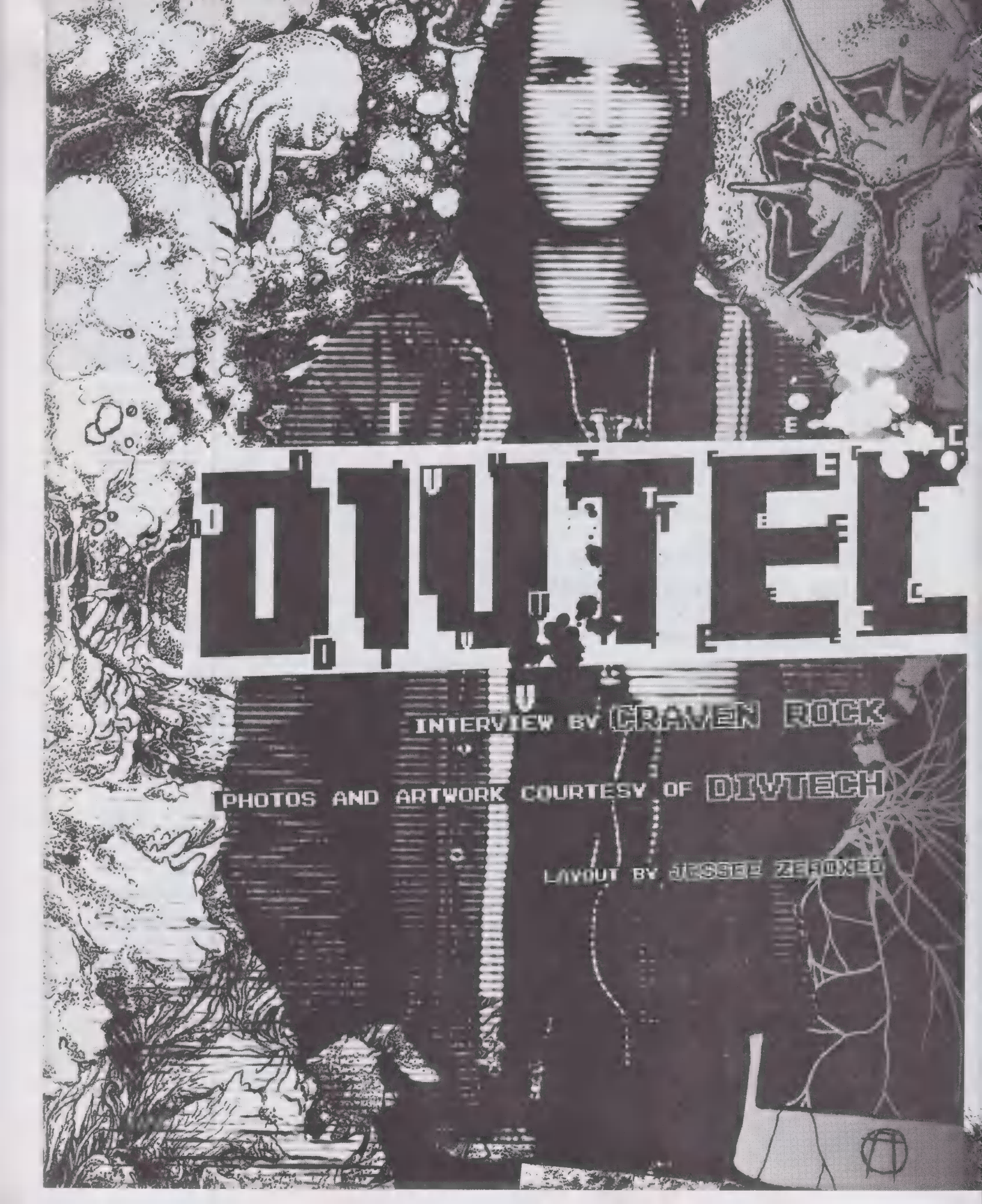
- *Veganomicon* (Worth every penny. By far, the most frequently used/referenced book in our kitchen.)

29 [science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6392/987](http://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6392/987)

30 [meatinstitute.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/47465/pid/47465](http://meatinstitute.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/47465/pid/47465)

31 [faunalytics.org/](http://faunalytics.org/)





# DIVTECH

INTERVIEW BY CRAVEN ROCK

PHOTOS AND ARTWORK COURTESY OF DIVTECH

LAYOUT BY JESSEE ZERONED





The first time I saw Divtech was a couple years ago at Autonomous Mutant Festival, an annual unpermitted gathering in the forests of the West Coast. Its origins were a hotbed of radical thought and a gathering of anti-authoritarian subversives based on the transgressive concept of the temporary autonomous zone. It's also a place where old friends come to party—a fun party, a worthy party, and a necessary party. It serves as a family reunion for me and my reset button. It was here I first saw Divtech, armed with a laptop, a mic, and a head full of youthful rage as he screamed his anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist screeds over fast, frenetic electronic music that crashed, screeched, and rattled. It definitely shook up some of my own complacency and comfort and reminded me of what I was looking for when I first attended the festival over twenty years ago. It was relentless, chaotic, noisy music that spoke with the urgency and fervor of punk rock.

It was angry and ugly with an impassioned immediacy putting to rest stereotypes some American punks have of electronic music being soulless, repetitive, and apathetic.

I wanted the punks to know all about it and nailed down an interview with Divtech. While doing research, I found Divtech's albums came with zines full of essays that explained his songs intellectually and emotionally, with the fervor of '90s emocore or an '80s peace punk band. He makes the kind of art that will challenge you to get out there and do something if you give it a listen.

**Cervus:** Tell me a little about your relationship with wasps.

**Divtech:** I've had two wasp incidents. I was waiting for Autonomous Mutant Fest last year. Wasps were not happy about our trails in the forest because they have their little holes in the ground. I didn't really know what happened to my head. I just felt a little pressure and then hundreds of them right afterwards. I was just running, screaming about being attacked by something. I ran back in the van because it was my dad's car. We were brotherhooders—and they screamed, "No, don't come in here!" because I was covered in stinging insects. Also, they were allergic.

Then I ran down the service road and there was a puddle in the middle of it, and I just dunked my head into it. I put my mouth through my hole and got more and more stuck. Eventually it was okay, but there was this weird

pain and weird low rush for the next few hours, along with the itching on my face.

The other incident is with my dad's car. Many years back when I was living in my van in Eugene, Ore., I'd left the windows open. This time some stinkier family started in on my car. I noticed after they were flying near and out of the windows regularly. I was kind of looking out about it, but then I started making up on them and realized they were really angry. I noticed them, but it gave me the interesting insight of a symbiotic relationship with where in which they could provide me with protection from cops, maybe? But one wants to deal with insects and if you know insects better than other people do it can work to your advantage. Keep people away from the car using harmless wasps.

**Cervus:** The last time I talked to you was last year and you had just told us about the

wasps. Those same wasps were biting a friend of mine. They got me at least once.

**Divtech:** Yeah. I apologize.

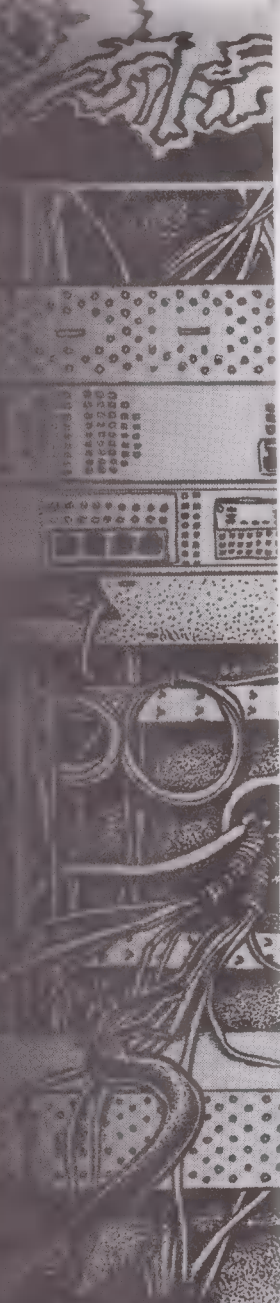
**Cervus:** I was reading some of your lyrics and you talk about rejecting the idea of nihilism in your words.

**Divtech:** The deconstructive futurism.

**Cervus:** In "Stash, Carthage, Action Unfinished," you talk about the need to create a meaningful, topical art in a world of nihilism.

**Divtech:** Yeah, it's a constant theme. A lot of things come back to the idea of just using something because of how limiting and how entrenched our setting is and how it makes it even easier to understand not acting.

**Cervus:** That it is difficult. Nonetheless, especially in the current state of things, it does seem pretty easy in the end because it seems like the world's going to end.





**Divtech:** I've got a special relationship with nihilism in that if you keep your ideologies from branching way too far out into philosophy land—way too far out into things you have no control over—those are the things that usually end up encouraging not moving at all. Having your ideology connected to immediacy, to your circumstances and your reality allows you to do things rather than just think about them. And that's how you move forward, by doing things, the concept of learning by doing and building a road by walking it. That's important. A lot of what I've learned is from jumping into things, figuring out the things you didn't know you would need to figure out unless you were dumped right into something.

**Craven:** Because it's good for *you*? You never know what effect your actions have on the world so that's why action is important.

**Divtech:** Law of unintended consequences, for sure. It's good to think about what you do before you do it, but our culture is so distant from the effects that you can get lost all too

**Divtech:** In specifically addressing the children of generations of colonizers, addressing that psychology and how it affects our decision making. How it affects our standards of living and where they are acceptable and where they are gratuitously unacceptable. The concept is you have a standard of living that is based off whatever you were born with or whatever you have had previously and these are your unquestioned premises which you navigate the world with. If you want things to be better, you have to address privilege and entitlement. Why you have the things that you have. Why others don't have those things. Those are good questions to always be asking. There are definitely concrete ways of undoing that.

**Craven:** So, you think that's possible?

**Divtech:** Absolutely.

**Craven:** So, after Trump's election these ideas are more important.

**Divtech:** This year since the election, there have been so many unprecedented cultural changes and weird feedback loops. I didn't really know what to expect from the elections. I haven't been spending as much time on it because there have been things that are more pertinent to be working on. Like just defending the communities—the friends that I have—from literal Nazis took a lot of precedent over more objective criticisms of why things are the way they are and how we can preemptively change that with time in the future.

**Craven:** Do you feel fear or even more fire to do what you need to do?

**Divtech:** It just feels unfortunate. It just feels like while it lasted for me, it was just a wonderful privilege to sit there and critique. Now I feel like things are a couple steps back and make for the more base-level, hierarchy-of-needs sort of things necessary before I can begin to address more academic, slow-burning subjects anymore.

**Craven:** Yeah, that's where a lot of us are at.

**Divtech:** Somebody has to be doing it at any one point. There's a lot of foresight that's lost when that doesn't happen. We need that diversity of tactics. Not everyone can be

**Divtech:** Yeah, that's definitely a genre term that I've used for a long time. When I got into breakcore—which I'd call a technique of electronic music of cutting up sounds in haphazard ways in order to make intense or harsh sounds but still beat-driven music—it was more something that I did for fun. My music has changed a lot over the years. I started making it when I was in high school and at that time it was more lighthearted. It was cynical and still slightly political, but it wasn't intentional the way it is now. I don't really have the room or the time to be spending on things that aren't really that important so when I open my mouth at all I'm going to say something that I feel like is worth saying.



easily in the ideology and just thinking about what you're doing, because the incentive to actually do something is not always there. I'm de-incentivized a lot of the time, so one of the thesis statements of that record was erring on the side of doing something as opposed to not, even if the consequences are unknowable to a certain degree.

**Craven:** Can you explain colonial psychology? I don't know if you made that term up...

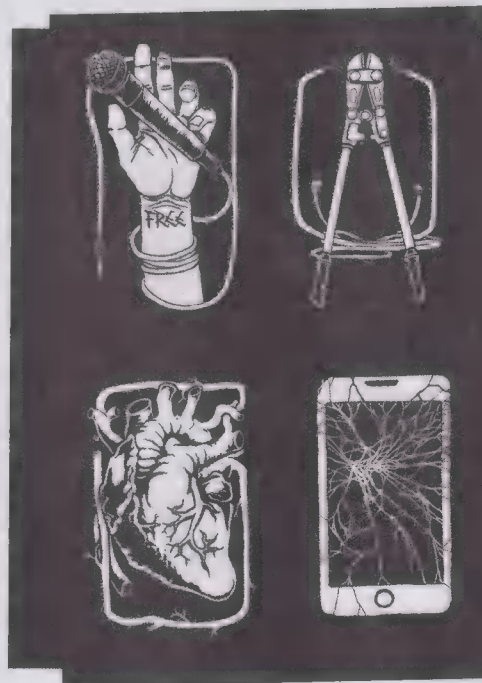
**Divtech:** It's relevant. What I address mainly is the psychology of the colonizers; that was who I felt like I was speaking to mostly. And that psychology that I was addressing is based off of hundreds of years of aggregating, assimilation, appropriation of outside worlds, of justifying doing those things, of building infrastructures on top of those justifications and having that loop.

**Craven:** It seems you use this term to describe something we all *have* and should struggle against.

## EVEN WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO DISENGAGE, CAPITALISM UTILIZES ADDICTION.

fighting for their life all the time. It really does inhibit being able to build things that don't suck.

**Craven:** So, from my understanding you make breakcore? Can you describe what it is for people who read a punk zine?



The cultures that followed the genre of breakcore have maintained the party aesthetic and have maintained a fun aspect over time. While I still enjoy it, it's not my first goal now. Breakcore does have its political roots. It did start out with more intention. It took me a while before I picked up on its history.

**Craven:** Culture-jamming is a big angle part of it.

**Divtech:** Yeah. I never got into bands like Atari Teenage Riot or DHR or even the old industrial stuff until way later on in my music. A lot of the politicized stuff—to be able to do what I want to do with it—that was given a lot of license

by the band Realicide. Seeing that could be done and that it really didn't matter if it sounded super nice or super ravey. I wanted to make that for a long time but was never really confident that I could turn what I was doing into it.



**Craven:** So is Realicide political breakcore with some similarities to what you ended up making?

**Divtech:** Realicide was a band from Cincinnati, Ohio consisting of people who I'm friends with now. The content they had was all very socially conscious. Very political and relentlessly unforgiving in its technique and its abrasive sounds. It was ■ like noise assertion of contemporary punk. I really liked that. When I jumped on the bandwagon trying to do something, it was with that in mind—even though my material at the time was more breakcore or musically driven.

**Craven:** Which did you come into first?

**Divtech:** I came into punk rock before I got into electronic music. The introduction I had to electronic music was through friends who liked black metal who showed me speedcore. Then through that I found breakcore and

it encouraged people to action.

**Divtech:** I'm sure that some of it did on a whole, but trying to maintain the aesthetic and just building the culture of people having bands seem like they're about something... I feel like that did kind of take over. Because that's a whole lot easier than actually trying to solve the stuff. That's for sure. Trying to solve stuff can take up your entire lifetime as opposed to playing in a band. As time goes by, I have less and less time to work on the music side of that stuff, because music is supposed to be my more interesting way of communicating that. That bleeds into my whole critique of art on the whole, whether it's an effective means of communication in most of the ways that it's used or if it's just something people do for fun. I don't want to say "no fun," though. It's still important. [laughs]

**Craven:** I was listening to Sole's podcast—he's a political rapper—and he was talking about being on a panel at an anarchist conference. He started talking about how if you were rapping about politics and you weren't on the front lines at the protest or you aren't out there doing the work then that's basically bullshit. After the talk, he was reminded by a friend that everybody there was there because they were inspired by political art, by music like The Clash.

**Divtech:** A diversity of tactics is definitely important. If you relied on only the people doing the work to be inspirational, you would have to be the one being there viewing it all the time, and not everyone can do that. So there does need to be people who are just authors, who are just speakers, people who don't just dedicate all their time to the gritty, practical aspects, but spend time on the symbolic. On the whole, our culture errs a little bit *too* much on the side of the spectacle and the symbolic as opposed to the practical, but they're both important.

**Craven:** One's easier.

**Divtech:** I'd like to think that, but, damn, watching activists who I know trying to fight the "optics war," as they call it—which is trying to make sure that their side is represented to the public or to other groups of people as being what they want it to seem like—that can be ■ hell of a struggle. I'm not sure if that's easier than doing other stuff, but I definitely have opinions on what the return for your efforts are.

**Craven:** When you could make music or art, it feels a lot better. There's a feeling of accomplishment in and of itself.

**Divtech:** Yeah, yeah. You're right—when you get to present yourself as a person who supports, or who stands for something. There's social capital you can accrue that you might not be able to if you were doing harder or invisible work.

## THE MORE YOU RADICALIZE SMALL PIECES TO INTEGRAL DAILY EXISTENCE, MORE OPTIONS AND IDEAS OPEN UP AS A RESULT.

**Craven:** How do you feel—as an outspoken political artist—your music fits into the spectrum of electronic music and rave culture?

**Divtech:** I don't think I fit all that well in many parts of it. Based on my experience, the music I make necessitates a different format, a different location, a different way of digesting that medium. I do think it's important that the medium itself is challenging. It skims down the people who are willing to engage, people who are willing to open up to doing things differently are going to accept it ■ little bit more. I dig that. Sure, maybe I'd like to have more people interested in it, but I appreciate the limiting factors that exist.

**Craven:** Autonomous Mutant Fest was the core of how I found DIY communities when I moved to the West Coast. It's definitely a positive thing.

**Divtech:** I feel like this is one of the best things the United States has to offer. The electronic music crossover with radical culture is one way or another unprecedented here. It has a long history of overseas, but just not here.

**Craven:** Because in Europe, it's just kind of what they do.

**Divtech:** Punks live in a squat; they have raves. That's normal. It's not like the two cultures are butting heads.

**Craven:** So, you live in a van with your partner and ■ cat a lot of the time. Can you tell us a bit about the nomadic life?

**Divtech:** I'm paying rent in New Orleans on a year lease. Right now, I'm in the woods in a van with my camp set up. Within the next month, I will be spending time living in my vehicle or, at least using it as an operation for everything that I'm doing. The wonderful thing about doing nomadic lifestyles stuff is that it's always an option to some degree. Even if you do have a house or a home, you still can move around. You still know what is and isn't possible. So with the resources you have, you can make decisions that make the most sense. Sometimes staying in a house, in one place, doesn't actually make the most sense. Sometimes it does.

**Craven:** You talk a lot about the alienation of a post-industrial society and fighting that. Obviously, you make art but what else do you do to resist this alienation and despair?

**Divtech:** I think the most important things that I'll address are the things that are on a daily level. While it's important to talk about specific campaigns, I feel like most of the difference is made in standards of living. One of the things that I feel most strongly about



drum and bass and things like that. Those were the things that I focused on making because you could get the tools to do it online really easy. It was just something I did for fun at the time.

**Craven:** Right, it's interesting because I do this new year's mix every year where I just burn some CDs for my friends with what I consider to be super motivating songs to start the year off. I put one of your songs on one of my mixes and a whole lot of my punk rock friends were big fans. It's obvious that people can relate.

**Divtech:** I'm glad it's even being referenced as being motivating. That's a real plus for me. I don't want to make the kind of music that just lets people indulge in the whole "things suck and they are going to continue sucking" mentality. It's an important criticism, but in terms of what you're building for yourself that's not necessarily what I want to try to provide for people.

**Craven:** In the late '90s, early '00s, there was a whole super nihilistic crust music scene with lots of gas mask imagery, and even though it was political, it seemed like it was relying on this "everything's fucked" idea. I'm not sure



is effective use of resources, use of waste, and how much of my life is dependent on or based around effectively trying to use waste properly. For example, whether it's getting a job and going out on my bike to go to work every single day and looking at every single street to try and find things I need on my way to or from work. Working in an area that's wealthier, because I know they're going to throw out stuff, strap it onto my bike, take it back, and then be able to distribute it or to use it later—dumpstering stuff and dropping food off to different places.

Those are very ingrained and normal life stuff for me that I feel is important. They teach a lot of lessons. They open up options that I wouldn't even know of if I was driving. I wouldn't have my eyes on things the same way if I'm riding a bike. If I'm riding a bike it means I'm exercising. It's all connected. The more you radicalize small pieces to integral daily existence, more options and ideas open up as a result. Don't create waste. Repair the things you have. Share your excess. Doing that stuff will encourage better things in the future.

Like the dumpstering thing—you get access and then you have responsibility to both use it and to share it. You end up having foods that you're not used to having, so you end up learning to cook new foods. Now you have a bigger repertoire of stuff you can work with. And then having the access and being responsible to share it means that you end up reaching out to find others who are into the same things. Now you're making connections with people who are going to be doing the same things. You have a community of people who are going out on semi-cloak and dagger style activities with and you're learning how to cooperate with them. You could just keep going with this.

**Craven:** That's fascinating. I feel like that perfectly answers the question because you speak of resisting alienation and despair and you're coming around to building a community.

**Divtech:** It's radical lifestyle. Yeah, that's very important.

**Craven:** There's a quote I particularly want you to elaborate on from your song "Fight to Win" when you say, "We just want back our lives lost, our families, our homes." It's a clear message but can you tell us more about what that fighting is when you say, "fight to win"?

**Divtech:** That's just being able to have a space that can be a home to some degree. How you get there is an entirely different question. The fighting part—fighting is meticulous. It's trying to contend with all the different ways the dominant culture alienates people, dealing with each circumstantially, and trying to make a space where you can, at least, feel comfortable. It's such a big topic. I just want to exist in some way unmediated by massively centralized power.

**Craven:** Scratching out a place in that is really difficult, especially since it's ingrained in us to feel alienated. When you talk about destruction of the earth and so much despair and capitalist alienation, I feel a tension there that makes your work inspiring. Do you feel tension between acknowledging what sucks and these feelings we have of hopelessness—while at the same time still resisting?

**Divtech:** That's not easy, but it's necessary. It seems contradictory. It totally does. Having a realistic sense of what you're up against is necessary to effectively be up against it. That's the connection. If it didn't require such meticulous dedication to information in order to dismantle these systems, I would never tell people to try to study that stuff, but it's necessary. You have to know or else you're doomed to fail in the way people have in the past. Someone has to know so some decisions can be made.

**Craven:** Finding that place is difficult.

**Divtech:** Everyone determines how deep they want to dive into that hole. I know a lot of people who spend a lot of their time tracking and archiving hate groups and alt-right people. Just trying to protect others; it's such grueling work. It's like being overtaken by things you don't like and having them in your presence all the time. Some people can do that work and some definitely can't. It's okay to be either of those groups.

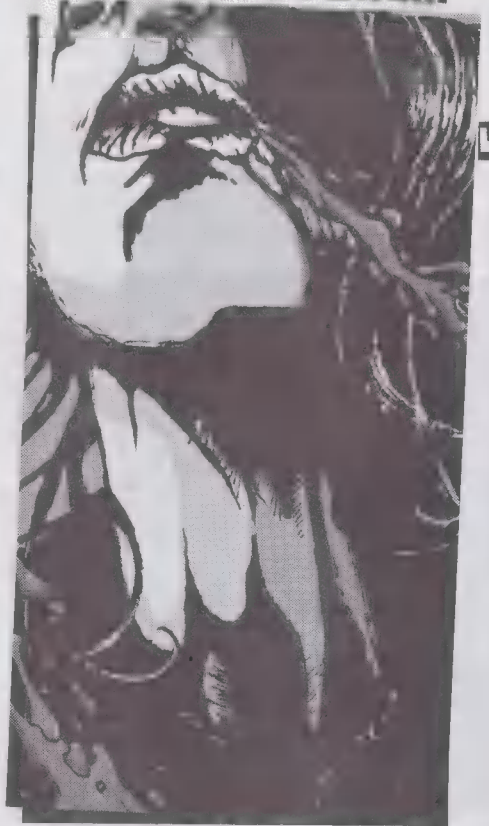
**Craven:** There's a lot of tension in your music that reflects that. The way you talk about technology has a very impending doom feel, but it also has a motivation to action and to fight that makes it powerful music.

**Divtech:** Yeah, the hopelessness is, to some degree, an emotional response. You can put as much critique as you want into something but if there isn't an emotional connection to it, it's not going to speak to people in the same way. Emotional communication is communication. It's important to be able to speak it if you're going to relate to people. While there's a lot of intellectual content here, there's also a lot of emotional language, a lot of reaching out and trying to find people who are willing to reach back, who are struggling with the same things, which means we can get people to be considerate of one another and will be able to care about one another.

**Craven:** Your latest release, "Unintended Consequences," is a three-song instrumental. It's darkly atmospheric, but at the same time, it's tense and driving with this undercurrent of pounding noise. You say it's an exposition on the power of volatility.

**Divtech:** I'm talking about the extent of unpredictability in certain things and knowing that unpredictability exists. It's an emotional response to knowing those things, because we're dealing with a lot of problems

I JUST WANT TO  
**EXIST**  
IN SOME WAY  
UNMEDIATED BY MASSIVELY  
CENTRALIZED POWER.



that are unprecedented in nature and that are evolving quicker than anyone has the ability to make solid predictions about. People are always going to make predictions, but when those things don't happen it can be a very overwhelming experience. To feel like you're losing your grasp on the ability to make preemptive action is also overwhelming. With those tracks, they were mainly emotional language. That was what I was doing with them. It was less concrete in its ideological stance as other work that I've done before.

That leads into another track that I'm working on. The working title is, "Discipline Is Not Enough." I'm going to expect that on some level, people are going to follow their convenience. I would like to hope that people have the discipline to do otherwise—to focus and dedicate yourself to accomplishing what they care about—but even that discipline has shown to be not enough at times. We can't just tell ourselves that we just need to strap down and be better at things. We need to make changes in our material circumstances. We need to create incentives to be who we want to be.

**A DIVERSITY OF TACTICS  
IS DEFINITELY IMPORTANT.**



Think about the example of social media apps. They're built from the ground up to be as coercive and manipulative as possible for the sake of accruing user engagement, and thus, making money. By the way, if you're looking for examples relating to this I suggest a book called *Hooked: How to Create Habit-Forming Products*. Even when people want to disengage—when they say they're going to and they really feel like they are going to go through with it—so often they end up back where they started. Capitalism utilizes addiction and we can't rely solely on our personal constitution to save us from it. Sometimes, *knowing* that we're going to fail occasionally is helpful to building ways that we won't.

**Craven:** When you talk about resisting technology, you refer to this resistance as "the greatest sacrifice of (your) generation."

**Divtech:** Arguably! Allegedly! [laughs]

**Craven:** [laughs] And you try to live by

that, which is interesting, because you make electronic music.

**Divtech:** But how difficult is it to get ■ two-hundred dollar laptop and steal all your programs?

**Craven:** Right.

**Divtech:** Tools are tools.

**Craven:** Well, there's irony there but that's not really where I was going with this question.

**Divtech:** Yeah, yeah. I get it. It's just the idea that most of who we are is attached to technology at this point and it definitely has a religious-esque, god-type following. It's one focal point that so many people of so many different classes all connect through. So resisting that medium feels like resisting the connection to most of the people who I exist around on a whole. If I feel like the medium is toxic, what am I supposed to think? If you feel like the air is toxic what do you do? Never go outside? If I feel like the medium is toxic, do I just not engage with it? Do have to engage with it in order to try and

to centralize in that way and the people who need those resources are going to get it outside of themselves. That's the pattern.

**Craven:** Outside of themselves, as in?

**Divtech:** As in they're going to go to their next door neighbor, kick the shit out of them, take what they have, and then bring it back their little castle and do what they want with it there. To build a system around being able to do that forever. I'm basically describing the process of resource extraction: taking something that existed for its own purposes elsewhere, and burning it and turning it into wealth for yourself. That's the only means that humans on an industrial level have found to be sustainable for themselves. To me, that's unacceptable.

**Craven:** Right, and it's one thing that's been continuous in some form or another. I was going to ask you about the irony of using a computer to make music, encouraging people to stay off of one.

**Divtech:** It feels like it's more efficient to make music with a computer than to buy or find and travel with and to record with more traditional instruments. They're just so bulky. With a computer, all I have are however many lines of code that fits on this tiny piece of hardware and I can take that with me all over the place.

**Craven:** It's perfectly DIY.

**Divtech:** The resources are there. With technology and e-waste stuff, there's always going to be technology people aren't really going to give a shit about that's going to be one step behind. That's the technology I enjoy. I like being able to use an old laptop and older versions of programs to be able to make stuff because, man, it's just so cheap and programs for making music have such variability in them on a whole. It shows with people who try to buy synthesizers with only ■ few knobs on them because they're like, "I like that I'm restricted to this amount of control, otherwise I would just go crazy." People who have drum machines—they like the tactile things, but it's also the restriction from being able to do whatever they want because it makes the act of creating something easier. If you have all these crazy amounts of options, if you're viewing something on such an extremely far back objective level, you're going to sit there trying to figure out what decision you're going to make all day and not actually make one.

**Craven:** How does that tie into your green anarchist philosophy?

**Divtech:** Yeah, that's at the root of everything because the criticism of resource extraction is at the root of everything. We can take back the resources from other humans and we care share the wealth in that way, but our standards of living are based off of things like mining and fossil fuels. They're still based off of that degree of resource extraction. So even if we get rid of the fascists, I'm still going to be fighting with the liberals over their way of importing stuff from other countries, or for their capitalism or economics. The green anarchism thing is at a root, but there are regularly things that take precedence over it. I mean, it's all integrated.



**HAVING YOUR IDEOLOGY CONNECTED TO IMMEDIACY, ALLOWS YOU TO DO THINGS RATHER THAN JUST THINK ABOUT THEM. AND THAT'S HOW YOU MOVE FORWARD.**

disengage with it? To what extent do I have to dive into it in order to get out of it?

**Craven:** Right. Exactly, that's where you're at if you don't get on Facebook. You're alienated from people, from your community. And if you get on Facebook...

**Divtech:** You're helping alienate your communities on ■ whole and commodifying each interaction you have, thereby eroding alternative ways of interacting. Unless I'm expecting that most people are going to be rewiring their biology to be congruent with the technologies that they're using, I feel like it's hard to make social media ■ healthy thing. I feel like we would need to do some serious brain hacking to get there.

The biological systems we've evolved with are very consistent compared to the speed of tech growth. They fail in a lot of ways, but as humans we haven't yet come up with much better functioning biological systems. That's not even getting into psychological systems and trying to create artificial intelligence brains that work the way human brains do—whether or not I think that we're even going to be able to get to that point technologically.

We, most people—not as some incredibly small technocratic minority in the future—are going to be able to have those resources. If I don't think we're going to be able to get there I can't get behind it. I have definite skepticism as to what extent most of us are going to be integrated with that world. It's more likely that walls the privileged get to live behind will get taller and will surround a smaller number of people. We'll also continue





# KAMALA PARKS



Kamala on  
drums at  
Gilman with  
Kamala  
and the  
Karnivores  
circa 1988



Screeching Weasel told me in 1991 that Kamala's too nice, but a short punk song couldn't do justice to the multiple ways Kamala Lyn Parks helped shape punk as we know it today. She has been involved with some of the most important moments in Bay Area punk and beyond. Kamala was actively involved with *Maximum Rockroll* early in the zine's history, contributed to the establishment of 924 Gilman Street, and played in a range of exciting touring punk bands.

Amid these well-known projects are also lesser-known contributions to the DIY touring network. She created a model for what it meant to book one's own life and how to tour in ways that fleshed out networks of social trust. Opportunities for today's bands to book DIY tours can be traced to her work booking bands. And many of those bands would go on to change the conversation about what it means to be a punk and to do punk. While Kamala continues to play in punk bands (old and new), she also has used her vast knowledge and experience in the punk scene to inform important work in Bay Area transportation planning. It was a thrill to talk with Kamala about her life in punk and to learn about the links between her diverse experiences.



## Hers Never Existed at the Stork Club in Oakland circa 1999

Forces at the Mab, Mabuhay Gardens. They were having matinee shows that were all ages. So then it was just that these were my friends and my friends were in bands.

**Daniel:** How quickly did you learn that you could participate in the scene versus just showing up and being an audience member?

**Kamala:** I started getting into punk when I was probably fifteen. *Maximum Rockroll*

*MRR* moved to San Francisco and I was part of the original crew that lived in the San Francisco house. I only lasted six months there. Tim (Yohannan, founder) had a very strong vision for how things should be done. When you lived at the house there were expectations for how much work you put in because your rent was subsidized. I was seventeen when I moved with them. I also had a very strong vision about what I wanted to do and I realized that I wanted to do other things than *Maximum*.

**Daniel:** Is that how you got into booking bands?

**Kamala:** A couple things happened in tandem. I had met Victor Hayden. Unfortunately, Victor died recently. He was The Mascara Snake on some Captain Beefheart records and he ran Alchemy Records—which the first Neurosis record was on—Clown Alley, and other bands.

We met through *Maximum*. So he and I teamed up and booked shows together.

Generally, I viewed things—whether it was booking a band locally or helping them out by driving them around or helping them get their own shows or whatnot—as an important contribution. Music was giving me so much. I had been doing shows locally here for touring bands. Bands would call me and say, “We’re coming through. Can you book us?” I did that for a number of bands, especially a lot of Canadian bands. I booked Nomeansno the first time they came through. From there I think my name got added to whatever Canadian network they had [laughs]. So I booked Asexuals and the Doughboys, as well as some other bands. My motivation to doing shows was when a band would come through, as opposed to doing a local show or having a regular place where I would do things.

There were clubs that did all ages shows on occasion, but not always—we were still

## Interview by Daniel Makagon Photos by Murray Bowles, Terry Taylor, Jasper Pattison, Bailey Kobelin, Bruce Treasure, and Martin Wong Layout by Lauren Denitzio

**Daniel:** How did you first discover punk? What hooked you?

**Kamala:** I came to punk from new wave. I was into Oingo Boingo, Adam And The Ants, A Flock Of Seagulls but I also had a stepmother figure, my father's girlfriend, who was quite verbally abusive towards me. Denigrating me a lot. Punk captured my anger and how messed up things were. Also, I was vegetarian and going in that animal rights direction, so bands like Subhumans, who released the *Evolution 7*—which was one of the first records I bought—had all these resources. So it was more than just the music; it was this whole ethos. Locally, there were bands that I loved, like the Dicks who were an amazing San Francisco band. I would also go to a lot of the record stores on Telegraph Avenue and a lot of punks worked in those record stores. These people were slightly older than me but would tell me that their band was playing. The first show I went to was Special

was, for a lot of us in the Bay Area, an integral part of a sense that you are more than a spectator. My friend Rachel Rudnick, who I went to high school with, said, “Why don’t you come by MRR and work on the magazine?” At that time they were still in Oakland. It blew my mind that that was something you could do. On Sundays, you could just drop in and the intent was that you would help, they would give you a job. Oftentimes, you take these things you can see and you consume but you don’t know what goes into it, and that experience at MRR was like, “Oh, wow, this is the nuts and bolts of producing something and supporting something.” Then I started thinking about other things I could do. Once you’re in *Maximum Rockroll* and you show up on a regular basis, you get assigned jobs—I did a scene report for the San Francisco Bay Area, wrote columns, did interviews with bands.



# My criteria for working with a band was always: "Do I like their music?" and "Are they good people?"



Kamala on tour with the Offspring in 1990 in Sioux Falls, SD

missing a lot of bands, so my focus was on making sure that bands that we would book were all ages.

**Daniel:** You're not even twenty-one yet?

**Kamala:** No. I'm nowhere near twenty-one, so it was a personal thing, but even as I got

to be twenty-one, I still feel the injustice and also the focus. I was always sober. I've never been drunk or taken drugs. That whole thing also seemed to be an antithesis to punk; it's so mainstream, even though they think they're rebelling. There may be nihilism in

punk, but it's a different kind of nihilism, not just getting fucked up. I still feel like there's an injustice. It drives me crazy when bands come through and they only play an age-restricted show. So Victor and I would find places to do shows, but they were often in places that were a bit tenuous. The fire marshal would come, but we moved around enough so that they didn't catch on.

**Daniel:** What leads you from booking bands locally to booking tours?

**Kamala:** One of the first bands I worked with locally was called Clown Alley. I was their, for lack of a better term, manager. I would do things... And they wanted to tour up to the West Coast of Canada. Because I had my connections in Canada from booking various shows down here, I was able to get to Victoria or Vancouver. But the other thing I was doing was using *Maximum Rockroll* scene reports. It was the linchpin for getting in contact with different people in different places. If I didn't have any contacts or no one I knew had contacts, I would go to a current or back issue and look to see who was the scene report person and contact them. Oftentimes people would print their phone numbers, which is funny to think about now. I did the scene report for San Francisco, so I printed my phone number.

**Daniel:** I know that a lot of bands relied on *Book Your Own Fucking Life* (BYOFL) beginning in the early 1990s. Many of those bands ran into problems with phone numbers not working by the time the issues were printed or people moving between the time a show was set up and the band would arrive. Were the scene report contacts more reliable or did you face similar problems?

**Kamala:** I used the scene reports as a starting point for who was doing stuff. Scene reporters were generally not the same people who were doing the shows. I developed my own list of people who did stuff in different places. The *Book Your Own Life* was something that *Maximum* took the ball and ran with after I wrote an article. The story behind that article is that I was getting phone calls every day because I had booked a lot of the Bay Area bands on tour, like Op Ivy and Crimpshrine. And I didn't know who a lot of these bands were and I didn't have the time. It wasn't a career for me [laughs]. I was talking with Tim Yohannan and I said, "I just wanna tell these bands: 'Book your own fucking tour,' you know." And he said, "You should write an article." I think there was enough response from the article and enough demand that they decided to do this whole booklet that helps people organize stuff.

**Daniel:** So you had your own contact list pretty quickly and it seems like word was spreading that you could book a good tour. Did you have your own published list prior to the creation of BYOFL?

**Kamala:** I didn't share my list of contacts. Not because of a secrecy thing, not because I was trying to hoard, but I didn't want to send bands to bookers who had done right by me if I didn't believe in the band myself. I also



1 HARRY LAKE, CANADA,  
PARTNER IN FISHING CO.  
MARCH 17, 1951

Senior Phoenix 1991

Cringer, Phoenix 1991

disadvantage, to being sober is that bands would rely on me to be the designated driver. And I knew how to drive stick shift. Those two things meant that I could go with Green Day and be the driver. They could do whatever they wanted to do and I could make sure they got home safely. Also, I was just friends with them. Op Ivy, again, these were people who I just knew. They made music I had passion for. If I didn't have passion for their music, it was hard for me to book them. Whatever successes these bands had, it was their doing; it had nothing to do with me.

Offspring was a total surprise for me. Green Day was no surprise when they became more mainstream. Rancid, I know that they felt a lost opportunity with Op Ivy and they really wanted to make a living with music. Again, not a big surprise. Offspring was totally out of left field. I had booked them on two tours, as well as other weekend forays. Offspring always had a few places where they were popular, but I never felt like they were gaining an audience. I didn't understand why they weren't more loved.

Then I moved to England to go to school for a year. I came back and I was talking with Matt Freeman (Operation Ivy and Rancid) and he was like, "You won't believe who's gotten popular in the time that you were gone." And I said, "Well, Green Day, right?" He said, "Of course. But the Offspring. Turn on MTV and I guarantee that within an hour you will see their video." I don't know how much more shocked I could have been. That was so bizarre to me because it was so unexpected. Stormy Shepherd had approached them and by then I hadn't been as involved with them. Not out of any spite; I'm still really close with them.

**Daniel:** Did you ever think about becoming a booking agent for ■ living? A lot of these same bands ended up being booked by

Stormy Shepherd, as you just referenced. She became a big deal in the booking world when "punk broke." Her career could have been your career [laughs].

**Daniel:** At what point do you start playing in bands?

**Kamala:** I joined a band called Pioneers Of Hell in '87, when Gilman opened, but later on that year. Our original guitarist left and we got another guitarist. Unbeknownst to us he was a fairly Christian guy and we were playing on Easter. And he said, "I can't play in a band called Pioneers Of Hell on Easter." So we changed our name to Kamala And The Karnivores. This was our joke when we'd go out—I'd be the vegetarian. And we couldn't think of anything better. We kept going through band members—having people quit or being weird. Ivy DuBois and I were the core. She just got tired of the revolving door and she didn't think we would ever tour, which is ironic. I would've made sure we toured. She joined Sweet Baby Jesus and we disbanded. Shortly after that I joined Cringer, a band that had already been in existence and had a pretty



decent discography. That must have been in '89. Luckily, Cringer was very active. Lance Hahn was a very prolific songwriter. We were always recording, always playing and they wanted to do a serious tour—to go through America and Europe—and I said, "I'll book the tour." Luckily Martin Sprouse, through *Maximum Rocknroll*, knew that Dick Lucas was in a new band (Citizen Fish) and said, "Hey, they're looking to tour the States." So I booked the U.S. part of the tour and they booked the European part. My first tour as a musician was a four-month tour in 1991 [laughs]. And I loved it.

**Daniel:** A tour is a great way for members of a band to develop as people and as artists and connect with communities of like-minded people, but touring also can create a great strain. The band members are always around each other—there's no escape. When the band's at home, band members can go their own way after practice or after a show. That can't really happen on tour. How did being with the same set of people for so long play out for you?

**Kamala:** I think it was ultimately a good thing for me. When I was growing up, I was really a loner. For the most part, I didn't develop relationships with people; I was really on my own. I think that can be a good thing, but also a bad thing. With punk, it was the first time I felt a connection with people. The tour challenged my natural tendencies, but in a good way. With that said, I took time to escape. For example, every week or so I would do something on my own, as simple as just taking a walk.

One of my favorite stories is that in Idaho we played with another band and I was talking with one of the women in that band. She said that her father was a ranger and they lived on a private animal reserve. They specialized in large birds. I said, "Oh my god, I'm going to come stay at your house." They had emus, and I was really into flightless birds. She said, "Sure," and so I took off with them. The next morning the emus were knocking on the window and I went out and was running around with emus. It was an incredible experience and I really did need to get away from everyone.

That's what I loved about touring: the scrappiness and meeting people and hanging out in the town. Sometimes it was chaotic staying at someone's house, but you had great conversations. Playing every night is not the fun stuff of touring. The fun stuff of touring is pulling off the side of the road and going swimming in the river. And let's talk with someone we wouldn't otherwise meet—maybe they'd take us somewhere that is really fantastic in the town.

**Daniel:** I know that questions about identity can always be kind of mixed, in that white men are never asked what it's like to be a white man in a punk band, but punk shifted from a diverse sound and scene in the mid- to late-1970s, where there were a lot of women involved, to more homogeneous scenes, especially hardcore and pop punk, which

**It's interesting to me that we're having this conversation about diversity in the punk scene, being inclusive—and the tension between altering the scene to appeal to people or just saying that this is what it is and if you're comfortable then you come to it.**

were heavily male. Can you talk a bit about being a woman booking shows and touring? Personally, I think it's very important that young women coming into a scene have some role models, and while you might not want to take on that banner, your work booking tours was especially crucial for helping develop a touring network in the U.S.

**Kamala:** Yeah, I had a couple role models. One was the manager and tour manager for Oingo Boingo, Laura Engel. She's someone who had a huge influence on me because I saw them when they were still playing in clubs. Every other situation where I saw women involved in music—unless they were the musicians—it tended to be as groupies. In the new wave scene, and I assume it was the same with rock, women had very definitive roles. Being exposed to her and seeing how the men listened to her: "10:00 AM be in the lobby." And I thought, "Oh, you don't have to be a groupie and you don't have to be a musician. You can be behind the scenes and helping move this production along, while being respected." Also, the drummer for the Dicks, Lynn Perko, and Anna Chapman, the drummer for Special Forces, were so important: "Of course, I could play drums." You can see yourself in a different way than the mainstream portrays.

When I was first into punk, I think it was more okay to kind of be a bit demeaning to women. But these weren't necessarily people I hung out with. To me, "Okay, you're going to

be that way. I don't feel that way about myself so I'm not going to hang out with you guys." Most of the people that I hung out with, while they were men, were not of that jockish variety. In the general scheme of things, it could be challenging. I remember playing in a band called Hers Never Existed and we played in Corona, California. We were on a week-long tour with the Stratford Mercenaries. People coming to see the Stratford Mercenaries were probably into Crass, so you'd expect a certain progressivism. I got on stage to play and I heard this guy say, "Great, another man-hating, butch, dyke band." Just because we were an all-female band—before we even began to play—that was the presumption. Yeah, you would definitely run into that.

**Daniel:** What about as a booker?

**Kamala:** No. Neither the bands I booked nor the people I worked with. I never encountered, "You're a woman. Why are you doing this?" But I think it's important to add that I've been thinking a lot about ethnic identity and punk. My mother's side of the family is Lebanese. And it wasn't something that I thought about at that time. Well, I was trying to escape it in many ways—no one knew for a long time that I was Arab or Lebanese.

But there was a point—after the Oklahoma City bombing—the first thing they did was go after Arabs. Of course, it turns out it's this white guy, but he's an individual white guy versus a mass of a brown population. But after 9/11 and America's demonizing of Arabs, I





## Plot 66, 2019. Kamala, Matt, and Faith (from Hooray For Everything)

became very involved with the Arab music scene and helped with booking an Egyptian singer. But doing that also reinforced how special punk is, because there was so much competitiveness in the Arab music scene, at least here in California. In punk, if you're booking shows and someone else is booking shows, you're excited, especially if they're doing a good job. This experience showed how important it is to feel supported.

For me, being Arab and being punk were two different things, but I also pass as white. Nobody looks at me and says, "Oh, you're Arab." So it's different than if I was Latina or African American and didn't pass. It's interesting to me that we're having this conversation a lot about diversity in the punk scene, being inclusive—and the tension between altering the scene to appeal to people or just saying that this is what it is and if you're comfortable then you come to it. That dynamic is something that I'm always thinking about. I want it to appeal to a lot of people and yet I understand that sometimes you're not thinking about your ethnicity when you get into something. I think that's a balance that we're always trying to figure out.

**Daniel:** Your connection to Gilman Street Project has been well-documented, but I think it's interesting to consider your work at Gilman in the context of the other experiences we've discussed. How do you see your contributions to Gilman fitting with your other projects?

**Kamala:** It's one of those things where Victor and I were doing our thing and *Maximum Rocknroll* was doing its thing. The difference was that *Maximum* had money from the magazine and they started to look at other endeavors to support the punk scene. Victor and I had experience booking shows, and I had experience booking some bands on tour. *Maximum* would do one-off things, but they also didn't have a sense of how touring worked, necessarily. Victor and I were looking in the East Bay and *Maximum* was looking in San Francisco.

Victor and I found 924 Gilman right off the bat, but we didn't have the money. So Victor convinced Tim, who was dead set on doing something in San Francisco, to come look at the place. Tim saw the place and met with the landlord, who was super-supportive. That was unusual, to have a landlord who wasn't scared by punk and what we wanted to do. Then Tim, in his way, went full hog with: "This is how we're going to do it." It kind of put off Victor and me because we felt like we had more experience and we wanted to do something different. And that's cool.

So *Maximum Rocknroll* took the ball and ran with it. Victor and I were involved, but not as involved as we could've been at the beginning. I didn't really get involved until probably May, after it opened. I would do things here and there, but I was never full hog in that I'm not a collective person. I admire collective efforts, I really do. Kudos to anyone

who can navigate in that environment. I'm just more of an autonomous person who does my own thing, and I think there's room in the world for both kinds of people. So I booked shows and I'd volunteer there, but there were some people who were way more dedicated to what Gilman was doing and very focused on that.

**Daniel:** You've talked about going back to school. You're booking bands, involved with Gilman to a degree, playing in bands. Do you just drop out of the scene or do you go to school while you're doing these other things at the same time?

**Kamala:** I was going to school at community college, part-time for many years. When I was twenty-four, I decided that I was really going to school full-timeish. I had grown up in the Bay Area and I wanted a new experience, so I applied to schools and ended up going to the University of Manchester. Even though England is very similar to the U.S., in that we have a lot of cultural connections, it was a real challenge my first semester there, understanding how their educational system works. So I really had to buckle down.

**Daniel:** Were you still playing in bands?

**Kamala:** I was in Naked Aggression. Well, that's when I was in community college. I only lasted a year in Naked Aggression. Once I finished my Bachelors degree, I formed a band called Hers Never Existed. That was in the late '90s. I booked Dead And Gone a lot after I finished school. Then I was



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Kamala, Tony Adolescent, Eloise Wong and Maggie Vail

teaching for a while and hated that. In 2002, I went back to school, UC Berkeley, to do transportation planning and engineering.

**Daniel:** You've been working in transportation planning for a while. Are there connections that link your work now and your experiences in punk?

**Kamala:** There are a lot of connections. Generally, planning is about taking a big item, breaking it down into smaller pieces, and relying on bringing people together. A lot of what I was doing in the punk scene was, for lack of a better term, networking. It was about building up those relationships, doing something collectively, and having a broader vision.

Planning is an important element: you're looking at the broad picture—big goals about where you want to be and what you're trying to do—and breaking it down. "To get there, I have to do this, I have to do that." In the transportation realm, there's a lot of doing outreach with your community or stakeholders. If you're developing a bike plan, then you're collecting data and taking input and mashing it all together to develop a plan. You come up with concepts, say, how a street might look. Then you use that to apply for grants or other things you might need to accomplish that goal. Then you usually hand it off to an engineer, who takes it and draws it out, and someone else does the construction management.

The planners are at the beginning of that phase. What I did in the punk scene with booking tours and developing a network is very much a planner-ly thing, even if I didn't think about it that way at the time. I like to call transportation democratic, because even if you're housebound, goods and services come to you through a transportation network. Most of us are out there using transportation, so it's very democratic in that everyone takes part in it, has an opinion about it, but it's also so crucial to how our cities are formulated. There's a symbiotic relationship between how

land use patterns are and how transportation supports or induces demand.

I'm working at Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). I'm getting more into the land use portion because of the housing crisis, greenhouse reduction needs, and climate action. One of the major reasons why they hired me is because governor Jerry Brown signed legislation that allows BART to build on its own land at a higher intensity than local zoning allows. It's controversial because municipalities say, "You're taking away power from us." But in the Bay Area, those municipalities haven't been keeping up with the housing demand at all. There are regional housing needs that are supposed to be met and I don't think any municipality is meeting that. They're not even meeting it for the high-end stuff, so they're certainly not meeting it for the middle.

In California especially, the homeowners have so much power that they can really derail projects. We have an affordability crisis. We have eleven new jobs for the creation of one dwelling unit. That's a huge disparity, so we want people to be located near transit. If they're near transit, their behaviors change. We're seeing a dip in public transit ridership, because they're having to move out to places where there isn't good public transit, to where the jobs are. It's hard to employ people who are going to make your espresso if you aren't building any housing for them.

What I learned about the political reality also helped me, too. At Gilman, we had to engage with the city council. There's threat on a regular basis because this scrappy little club—what's its value? Luckily, in Berkeley our mayor is super supportive and he was excited when he found out that I was one of the founders. It's amazing to have a mayor and other council members to be supportive of this thing that other cities might not welcome.

**Daniel:** When we were coordinating this interview, you mentioned that you're also

playing music again. What's been happening on that front?

**Kamala:** The band is called Plot 66. We haven't played out yet, but it's with a couple of people who used to be in a band called Hooray For Everything, a woman named Faith and a guy, Matt. She more recently played in a band called Dark Beach. I've always admired her songwriting and she's a very prolific songwriter. She's had two kids somewhat recently, so she was out of commission for a little while, but I approached her and said, "Hey do you want to play? I'd love to play with you." It's nice.

I also did some reunion stuff with Kamala And The Karnivores. It was fantastic to be reunited with my bandmates, reestablishing that relationship and playing songs that we played a long time ago, but it's really nice to do something new and creative. I think we'll just be a local band, given that she has two young kids at home and I'm really focused on my new job at BART. But it's just exciting that I'm a fifty-one-year-old woman and I can do something creative that's not my job and hopefully people will like it.

**Daniel:** Have you recorded anything?

**Kamala:** Plot 66, not yet. Kamala And The Karnivores recorded in 2017. We recorded songs that we had written a long time ago but never recorded. Our second guitarist, Michelle Gonzales (drummer for Spitboy), said, this is something we should do—we should have an archive. It went really well and we played some shows here and there. Also, my husband and I and two people from Sacramento from a band Rad—and who are also in some other bands—did Cringeworthy, which was a tribute to Lance Hahn, playing some songs from Cringer and J Church. We wanted to honor this guy who was incredibly important, especially to an Asian punk community. When I started listening to the songs again, they were really endearing and there are a lot of elements to the songs.

So that was really great.











Texas's Xetas have created a signature sound. Their music makes me think back to the punk pioneer days when there were no direct antecedents to the music punks made; bands pulled from overlooked and obscure corners and cracked them open, filtering as much inspiration from sound ■ they did from attitude, intention, and purpose. As much as I love and listen to classic punk, I'll never be thirteen again in 1985, hearing it for the first time. It's a special band that's contemporary—sonically unmistakably a punk band playing fast with volume, noise, and force—but not *just* another one where a Jr. Punk Detective Kit will pull fingerprints of the usual suspects of past giants from their equipment.

Yet, fuck me if I'm not partially stumped on how to satisfyingly explain to you what Xetas do sound like. They incorporate male/female vocals and sound as if Leatherface was hell-bent on destroying music. It's unconventional, weird-addictive-melodic punk pushed one step further. It also makes perfect sense to me that they've opened for both Superchunk and Mudhoney.

After doing this interview, ■ possible key to a deeper appreciation of Xetas is they harness the artistic iconoclasm and aesthetic limberness of Kate Bush and the raw electricity sparking from Public Enemy's *Fear of a Black Planet*—while sounding nothing like either. Xetas are a celebration of punk that doesn't rely on cheap idolatry of past greats for direction, doesn't need to conform to wearing-thin musical uniforms to be heard, and isn't in a musical suburb where all we're doing is waiting to die.

Interview by **Todd Taylor**  
and **Jennifer Federica**

Introduction by **Todd Taylor**

Photos by **Angela Betancourt**

Layout by **Eric Boskouskas**

**KANA—BASS, SINGER**  
**DAVID—GUITAR, SINGER**  
**JAY—DRUM, SINGER**

**Todd:** Kana, you were a manager at Waterloo Records and were ■ nanny?

**Kana:** Oh yeah, I forgot about the nanny thing.

**Todd:** David worked at Beerland and now works at a vegan restaurant?

**David:** That is true, yes.

**Todd:** Jay is an after-school program director at the YMCA.

**Jay:** I just work at Waterloo now. I used to do that, though.

**Todd:** Is it safe to say that Xetas are a working class band?

**Kana:** We work it and we keep it classy. [laughter]

**David:** Yes, we all have day jobs.

**Kana:** We all come from families where our parents worked and are used to that:

**Todd:** How does that shape what Xetas does?

**David:** We can't tour as much ■ we'd like because we have to pay bills. Shit like that feeds the fire of frustration that informs the songs.

**Jay:** It helps you take it not for granted, because you've got to be doing that as a way to escape the working class stuff in your life.

**Kana:** You definitely meet bands that complain about their agents and I'm like, "That's cool, but I could be asking people if they want ranch or jalapeño ranch right now. This is way better and they have free sodas here." So I'm counting that as a green in my life. Not a red thing. I feel happy when we get to do it.

**Jennifer:** I'm happy that you get to do it because I'm happy to listen to it. [laughter]

**Todd:** What job did you avoid and thought you were destined for if music didn't redirect you?

**David:** Does drug dealer count?

**Todd:** Sure.

**David:** That's what my whole dad's side of the family did. Going to ■ trade school—not going to be able to afford to be sent to ■ nice college. Or the other trajectory—my uncles ended up selling drugs and going to jail. I'm glad I avoided both of those. All three of my sisters, my mom, and my aunt at one point all worked for the Cummins engine plant. I'm from Columbus, Ind. It basically made that town.

**Jennifer:** Why are you happy to avoid it?

**David:** None of that sounds exciting to me. From when I was around eleven or twelve when I got my first guitar, that was the only thing—even if it meant I would be homeless but still playing in bands—because I couldn't imagine anything else being my focus. I'm glad I didn't settle for something else.

**Jay:** Office jobs—I've avoided those like the plague.

**Kana:** I wanted to be an ER nurse because I got ■ job being a vet tech and I really liked that. I was ■ surgery assistant. I was lucky to work at a place at an entry-level job and they would train us to move up, so I got to learn advanced skills without going to school. I come from a long line of very educated but poor people. Everything was about going to school and having manners. It was a way to get around in life even if you didn't have a pot to piss in.

I have my white family and my Japanese family. My Japanese family is the classic



divided story of fisherman grandpa and a very wealthy grandma. My grandpa had to work very hard to win the affections of her family. Then they had my mom and her brother. My mom married my dad and came over here. My white family is very poor, Southern, but very radical activist weirdoes, teachers. People like that. Everything from radio DJ to an accountant who lives on a boat so that he can avoid everyday American shit. My uncle bought a church in Connecticut and is renting it as a community space—the one we stayed with who gave us maple syrup that he tapped himself.

**David:** “Tapped the whole neighborhood.” It was unbelievable. “My neighbor’s all, ‘Oh, I saw you tap that. You wanna come over and tap mine?’ I was sure, ‘I’ll come tap that for ya.’” [laughter] Me and Jay kept looking at each other. “Does he realize what he’s saying?”

**Kana:** That’s how I more got into punk stuff. A lot of it was doing it yourself. Make your own maple syrup or medicine or whatever. “Oh, that’s what my family does all the time.” Cool. All these punks are cool. That’s nice. So let’s all make stuff and have potlucks.” And shows are cool, too.

**David:** “I’m in punk for the potlucks.” [laughter]

**Kana:** Making stuff and hanging out is what I liked. I would always get disappointed when people—you know how politics are—“C’mon, this is about having food and hanging out. Quit making it weird.” In my family, the death knell would have doing something corporate, or for The Man, or selling out. Everybody’s a crazy-weirdo entrepreneur. So I wanted to be a nurse. That’s useful. I was really into the idea, but school was so bogus. It wasn’t like I didn’t like learning or I didn’t like the classes—everything around school was just so weird. Weird socialization and weird setups in meetings. “Why can’t I just frickin’ learn everything and do my own thing?” It’s all about the school experience. I’m like, “What if I just need to go to class and get out? You guys make it into this cult.” I kept getting frustrated and eventually even my parents were like, “Maybe you should just do music.”

**Jennifer:** That’s nice.

**Kana:** “As long as you’re paying your bills.” So I’ve just been working really hard. I just moved outside of Austin where it’s cheaper and I opened a record store out there. That’s what I’ve been working on the last couple months. That’s been my biggest grownup thing I’ve ever done. Paperwork and filing. That’s all new to me, but at least I’m doing something that I really care about. And I still work at a pizza place.

**Jennifer:** With the record store, was it because you could get the store a bit cheaper there? I imagine Austin has quite a lot of record stores.

**All:** Four or five. Yeah.

**Kana:** We just moved out there because it’s quieter, easy, and chill. Plus, from touring, we’d go to these areas in the Midwest and East Coast—they’d go to the next town to work. It dawned on me; I could live just

outside of Austin, do my shit, and that’s fine. Then a bunch of little opportunities opened up. Me and my partner Cody opened up the shop, Bluebonnet Records together.

**Todd:** Which is the Texas state flower.

**David:** Uh-huh. [With a drawl.]

**Jay:** People go wild for them. [laughter]

**David:** Don’t pick them.

**Jennifer:** How fun, though.

**Kana:** Lockhart’s really cool, but it’s definitely a small town. I picked a friendly name. Up until the store, I’ve pretty much worked waitress jobs.

**Todd:** Jay, you joined after the Xetas started.

**Jay:** I’ve been in the band three years now.

**Todd:** The job search for a replace drummer was very short, right?

**David:** Six hours.

**Jennifer:** [laughs] Then, yes.

**David:** I was like, “We need to rectify this as soon as possible” because we were working on the second record, *The Tower* and had a three-month plan of recording and setting up a tour. “What are we going to do?” There were two people we talked about, but Jay didn’t say no.

**Jay:** “It would be cool to drum for that band. I think I could do a good job.”

**Kana:** I think that David is the best guitarist, ever.

**David:** I’m all right.

**Kana:** I was really insecure about my bass playing but once we started practicing with Jay, I was like, “Oh, no. I’m a really good bassist.” I just had to play with the right person who gets how I play. I feel like we play with more booty.

**David:** We write things that are swingier.

**Kana:** With us three, it doesn’t feel like me following them, “I wanna play, too!” I can write my type of part and they know how to Xeta-fi it. It works.

**Todd:** Who broke off their finger in a door?

**Kana:** I did. Wanna see? It’s gross. [Shows her finger.] You can see the scar. Sometimes it doesn’t work really good when it’s cold.

**Jennifer:** How did that happen?

**David:** The big, weighted metal door slammed on her finger at Counter Cafe. [Oohing and wincing.]

**Kana:** They had just replaced the hinge, so it was fresh, sharp. You know how some doors have an air stopper? This had one but it was a freaky-windy day we get sometimes. As I was coming in, my hand’s on the doorframe and the wind just snapped it shut.

**Jennifer:** That’s painful. That’s painful.

**Kana:** I pulled my hand out, and this tip was just dangling. Two pieces of bone sticking up. My first thought was, “David’s going to be so mad.”

**David:** I was furious. [laughter, facetious] “Your irresponsibility is putting us in jeopardy again.”

**Kana:** I was in such shock I didn’t even think about, “Oh, my finger snapped in half.” I was, “Oh, no, we have a show on Tuesday. Fuck.” I looked down to the cooks. “Yo, check it out!” They were Boy Scouts. They splinted my finger and one drove me to the

hospital. It was Veterans Day—quiet in the streets around the capitol. It was a father/daughter team of doctor and nurse that sewed my finger on. It was really cute. They said, “It’s going to really crazy here once everyone gets really drunk. By seven o’clock, people are going to be coming in from falling off ladders, grill and firework accidents.”

That was kind of a cool time because I was really obsessed with working a lot on the band and the scene and I wasn’t slowing down to take care of myself. It was almost good that I had to chill out for a little bit. Because my work had only four or five employees, we didn’t have workers comp, so my dad was, “You’re going to pay my daughter’s rent while she heals and you’re going to pay all of her bills or else I’m going to sue you. She quit school to do music and this is her livelihood. If you fuck with her and don’t give her her job back when she’s healed, I will come after you.” My boss believed him. Who’s my dad? Nobody. She paid my rent for three months. She gave me a little extra for bills. I just took pills and laid in bed. I wrote “The Break.”

**David:** You just hummed it zonked out of your gourd. You’re leaving out that we didn’t cancel either of the shows; you just learned all of the bass lines on keyboard and played it with one hand with other hand above your head. It sounded like John Carpenter ’80s horror movie.

**Jennifer:** Wow, what a way to roll with the punches.

**David:** It sounded cool, too.

**Kana:** Before Xetas, my other band was way more post-punky, groovy. In my mind, I was like, “I don’t know how to play fast.” I was just determined—whatever I have to do to prove I can be in a loud punk band—I’m going to do that. I’m not going to cancel. I’ve always felt like the person who was not cool enough to be in a punk band.

**Jennifer:** *Au contraire.*

**Kana:** To make sure I was making every show, playing it right, just to show people.

**Jennifer:** That is actually incredibly punk. The other thing is; do you have to be cool to be in a punk band? Because I’m pretty sure the answer is absolutely not.

**Kana:** Definitely at thirty one, I can recognize that, but through my early twenties I definitely was still like, “Who am I?” I come from non-punk world and I didn’t even know about the normal punk bands until I broke my finger because I read *Our Band Could Be Your Life*. First off, I was like, “Gerard, I didn’t know you were this famous. You did all this shit and you didn’t tell me this.” He’s like, “Why would I tell you?”

**Todd:** Quick sidebar—Gerard Cosloy is...

**Jay:** He runs 12XU Records.

**Kana:** Our label. He did Matador and Homestead.

**Jay:** Signed Liz Phair, Pavement, Sonic Youth.

**David:** Pretty much every band I like.

**Kana:** He was one of these older guys who come to shows in Austin. I don’t see that so much in other scenes, but I definitely see in Austin there’s not as much as ageism. So I



**KATE BUSH.  
WE LOVE ANY KIND  
OF VERY STUBBORN  
INDEPENDENT  
OUTSIDER ARTIST.  
SHE'S THE  
EPITOME  
OF CRAZY  
WEIRDO.**

just knew him around town. Then I read the extent of what he had done. "Wow, it's extra special that he wants to put out our record." In my mind, everybody at my school who wore Minutemen and Hüsker Dü (both featured in the book) shirts were burnout assholes who would call people the f-word. I didn't want to be a part of that. I was more friends with the weirdo art kids who listened to Le Tigre, so I never got into punk until I met David and saw it live. My experience as a teenager with the hardcore scene was being picked on, bullied.

**Todd:** That sucks.

**Kana:** It really sucked.

**Jennifer:** Boo!

**Jay:** We're an anti-bullying band.

**Kana:** Also, I feel like I had a little bit of bully in me and being bullied really taught me how it felt so I cut that out of my life.

**Jennifer:** For me—if I think about politicians doing something terrible—it makes me more upset if a woman is doing it. "You don't do that like the guys do." And I feel that way about punks, too.

**David:** Don't play their game.

**Jennifer:** You're not supposed to be racist, sexist.

**Jay:** People just ruin stuff.

**David:** That was the thing in my high school, when I did go. All the punks in my Midwest high school were Nazi punks.

**Jennifer:** Terrible, awful.

**David:** I was like, "Is that what the punk scene is?" But I lived near enough to Bloomington, Ind. that I would go from my terrible hick town to there where punks were doing stuff—house shows where people weren't getting beaten up for no reason. Nobody's got a swastika on their drumset here. "This is chill. I like this."

**Jennifer:** I grew up near DC, so I have a very different experience. Not like there's no bad people in DC.

**David:** But that stuff's not tolerated the way it is in the rural Midwest.

**Kana:** I think it happens in where you're this overlooked region. You have to be okay with people who are middling and you can't be as picky and forward about things. Out here it's just like [in Southern drawl] "Who's gonna find you in the woods, sonny boy?" And you're like, "Fuck, I'm fucked." I'm friends with the one person who tolerates me rather than, "We're going to band up and defeat the Nazis." You and what army? It's a little bit different when





you're in these rural outpost areas where even the punks will treat you like shit. Sometimes you've got to wheel and deal and it sucks. It's more about picking your battles and hit 'em where you can.

**Todd:** I was a little incredulous when I read that you all cite Kate Bush as an influence.

**Kana:** [Shows arm tattoo.] This is the cover of *Never for Ever*, baby.

**Jay:** That one is really weird and kind of whimsical.

**Kana:** It's great for mushrooms. Good for headphones.

**Jay:** Cool. Good to know.

**Todd:** Jennifer and I watched a great BBC documentary about her. I just knew the hits.

**Kana:** We love any kind of very stubborn

independent outsider artist and she's the epitome of crazy weirdo. She owns the rights to all her songs. She refuses to fly. She lives in a castle.

**David:** Which is going to fall into the fucking ocean, apparently.

**Jay:** Yeah, it's not a good spot.

**David:** Which is a very Kate Bush thing. "I don't care. It will fly away when it's time."

**Kana:** She's using synthesizers at a time when it was weird to use them.

**Jennifer:** She was very progressive.

**Kana:** Using literary themes.

**David:** I like the Gothic horror element of it.

**Kana:** Apparently, music is just her side bitch. Her real passion is interpretive dance.

**David:** There's layers.

**Jennifer:** She has a weird voice. She's so interesting.

**Kana:** She's a straight-A scholarship student type. Top of her class. "Oh, I could be a mega-star, but let me finish school and dunk on 'em. Then I'll come back and be a pop star."

**Jennifer:** There were several people on the documentary who you would not necessarily expect to say, "Wow, Kate Bush totally changed my life."

**All:** Big Boi from Outkast.

**Jennifer:** When I saw it, I was thinking about these other people like Nina Hagen, Lene Lovich, or Fiona Apple.

**Kana:** If you look at Beyoncé's work for the last ten years, she uses so many Kate Bush ideas and concepts in her visuals and





videos and nobody knows because nobody from the hip hop community really fucks with Kate Bush.

**Jay:** "Babooshka"'s under wraps.

**Kana:** It's this amazing Easter egg just for me.

**Jennifer:** Do you know that? Have you asked her?

**Kana:** I've seen interviews where Beyoncé has cited Kate Bush as an influence and most people wouldn't ask past that question but a Kate Bush fan is going to go, "Everything makes sense now." Another thing, too, every professional choreographer in the world, especially for music videos, is going to know Kate Bush's work. To me, that's a permanent permeance into art that's very respectable.



**THE BEST THING  
YOU CAN DO  
IS SHUT UP  
AND LISTEN  
SOMETIMES.**

Not everybody has that power. She's also like, "Are you uncomfortable?"

**David:** She's not afraid to go weird even within the realm of her stuff.

**Jennifer:** I had a totally wrong idea about her and I don't know where I got that idea.

**Todd:** I like the Xetas for a lot of reasons and that's one of them: being open to other forms of music, synthesizing it, and making more awesome music. So much punk turns into a cul-de-sac.

**Jay:** Totally. It's not interesting.

**Kana:** We listen to a ton of rap and I feel like that philosophy is encapsulated in rap. You have this old song and you're tired of it. Let's put a break beat under it, then you have a brand new song.

**Jay:** Rap is not about the old.

**Kana:** Also this idea if you're listening to stuff that's constantly sampling other stuff, then you're also tapping into all those things—like a crazy African guitar—or if Kanye samples this old soul singer, you're going to check them out. You're introduced to all kinds of music.

**Jay:** I definitely take the least amount of influence from punk when we're writing Xetas songs. It's always from another genre and how we can put it into punk.

**Todd:** You're the filter.

**Jennifer:** Especially with hardcore, I don't want to just hear a song that's super fast. I have heard that a thousand times.

**David:** We had all of the '80s for that.

**Jay:** The ones that started it were over it in '84.

**Jennifer:** Okay, fast? You better play something interesting.

**Todd:** There are still ways.

**David:** Totally.

**Kana:** In an interview, Three 6 Mafia got asked what they listen to before they go into the studio, and they said, "We love to listen to AC/DC *Back in Black*." I always thought that was so cool.

**Jay:** That record slaps.

**Kana:** When you're about to make crazy ghost organ weird Memphis rap, you listen to AC/DC as your palate cleanser.

**Jay:** We'll listen to Public Enemy or Big Country.

**David:** Especially with arranging the new record, *Fear of a Black Planet*. I keep going back to that. It's the perfect record. It's

my favorite record. It's a beautiful piece of art and that's been one of the biggest influences—and Refused, *The Shape of Punk to Come*. Such a good record because it takes ideas that are completely outside the realm of punk rock and let that inform what is ostensibly a punk record.

**Jennifer:** They put a lot of electronic stuff in *The Shape of Punk to Come* and, of course, the jazz parts.

**Jay:** It doesn't have to sound like it to be punk. It's more the attitude.

**Jennifer:** It's totally true. It's how they identify.

**David:** The approach. I think it's about what your motivation and methods are.

**Kana:** If you look at lists of people who are revered as great sound makers, their amalgam of what they listen to is always bizarre. You don't get a good thing from just studying the craft; you have to let all these other things influence you.

**David:** My favorite band of all time is probably the original Misfits; a band I don't dislike a song by. I don't think I'd like them as much if they were just trying to be like every other hardcore band. But the fact that they're a hardcore punk band where the singer is obsessed with Jim Morrison and Elvis, that gives it just that little weird nudge. I love it.

**Jay:** Every musician or band I respect is never into just the genre they play.

**Todd:** How deep is the tarot influence with Xetas?

**Kana:** Not very.

**Todd:** I'm looking at visual cues. The cover of *The Tower*, as an example. The Tower is a card in the tarot.

**Kana:** I think we centered around the visual of *The Tower* because that year was fucking bonkers.

**David:** Nobody thought Trump was going to get elected so we didn't write the album thinking, "Oh, man, we're going to stick it to President Trump." It was, "Oh, man, imagine if he had gotten elected. This is how bad shit could be." This is science fiction. Then he got elected. "Ohhh."

**Jay:** Kana did the art.

**Kana:** And we made it Trump Tower. It was right after election night.

**David:** Fun fact. The background of it, the pink sheet is the sheet from the first 7" and I soaked it in wine to represent the blood of Christ [laughter]. It's unifying from the first record to the second.

**Kana:** That stuff is fun to us. We watch a lot sci-fi and movies and like little connection points.

**Jay:** It's the Xetasverse.

**David:** I'm very pretentious. I still have the sheet. I might do a third thing to it. Keep that sheet.

**Todd:** All of the songs are titled "The \_\_\_\_\_" fill in the blank.

**David:** The whole "The" gimmick.

**Jay:** "The" gimmick! [laughter]

**Kana:** It's a practice space thing that just escalated.





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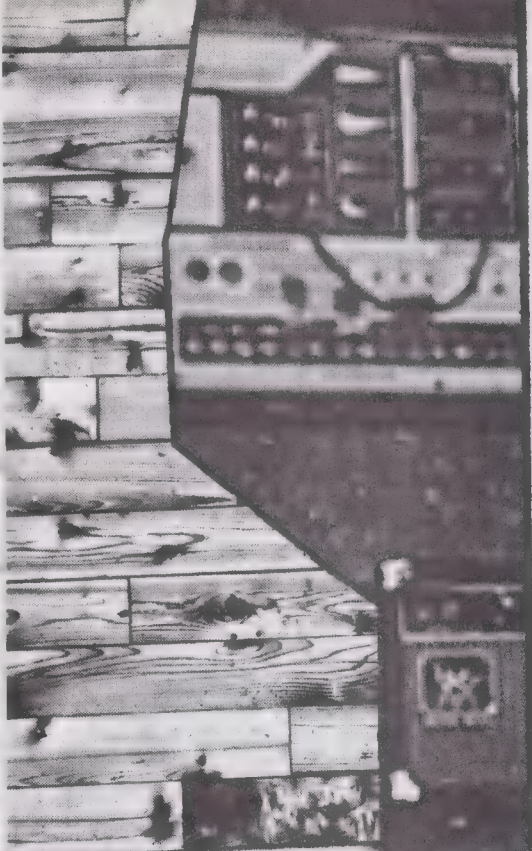
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RAZORCAKE







**David:** We had two songs with "The." Why don't we name them all "The \_\_\_\_."

**Jay:** And here we are.

**David:** I was also reading *The Lost Weekend* because I was trying to get sober. It's about this weekend this alcoholic has where he's taking advantage of everyone, blacking out left and right, starts hallucinating he's so drunk. Every chapter is like, "The Bat." I was writing a lot of the lyrics in the margins of that book while I was reading it. Seeing that repeated over and over again, "That's a cool thing." This is going to be the last record we do that on.

**Kana:** Then it will be "The" trilogy.

**Todd:** Then it will be "The" end.

**Kana:** But it keeps them cohesive, which is fun. When you write yourself into a corner, and you feel like you can't change, this creates a natural breaking point where if we start adapting new styles, try a different studio, or if we're going to have Theremin on a song, it's not so weird...

**Jay:** We almost did that.

**Kana:** Now if we want to do something more out there, we can say, "We gave you this beautiful trilogy."

**Jennifer:** Also, if people are fans, then they have to let bands grow and do what they want, even if you don't like it.

## I WISH I COULD WRITE A SONG, AND THEN THAT PROBLEM DIED.

**Todd:** Let's talk about "The Gaze"—the collaboration and formation of the song.

**Jennifer:** Such a great song. I love it so much. Thanks, guys.

**Kana:** I feel like "The Gaze" was one of the first songs where I was like, "Oh, I'm going to do some fancy stuff." That was a breakthrough writing song for me: "I can play bass now. I'm good at this, not just okay." Then David was, "I want you to sing this one." I was, "Oh, no."

**David:** Because Kana hadn't played bass in a band. She was nervous about being able to play bass and sing at the same time. It is hard to be a lead instrument with your voice and a rhythm instrument with your body. When I asked Kana to be in Xetas, part of it was because I wanted to have songs from male and female perspectives.

**Kana:** I knew it was coming, too. I didn't have lyrics for a long time. I felt like an idiot every time at practice. Lyrically—I had a bad day at work—and I just want to sing with intention. Part of it was I had this idea in my head that if I'm going to be in this band, I have to learn how to "Rar!" How do I get around this? "The Gaze" was great because it was me practicing how to be "Rar!" but then also being able to go

back to my way of singing which is more like Daria talk/sing. This guy one time was like, "You kind of sound like a girl Steve Albini," and I was like, "Thank you. I'll take that."

**David:** Her voice is lower than mine. Usually, in male/female dynamic, it's the opposite. It upends what you normally expect.

**Kana:** There are a lot of songs that are like, "Men are scum and let me tell you why!" Yes, I love those songs. And there are a lot of songs that are like, "Guys, we've gotta do better!" and I love those songs, too. But what about when you're actually friends and you're like, "This sucks." And your friend's like, "I know it sucks. But waaaaa? I'm on your side, too."

**Jay:** That's a natural conversation a lot of people have.

**David:** The part I sing is a response to what she's saying, but it's not a response of, "I'm gonna come in here and fix this." It's "I hear you."

**Kana:** "And it sucks."

**David:** "I need to know more about this subject. Educate me about this." I'm not going to just come in and be like, "I know how to fix this." The best thing you can do is shut up and listen sometimes. You don't have to come in and save everybody. Maybe people know how to save themselves. They just need your help.

**Jennifer:** It's very relevant, particularly today.

**David:** Sadly more relevant every second.

**Kana:** I hate when that happens. I wish I could write a song, and then that problem died.

**Jay:** And that song's a history song.

**Kana:** That's how you kill it.

**Jennifer:** That'd be great.

**David:** There's a song on the first record called "The King" that I wrote about guys in bands getting away with being sexual predators because they're in popular bands. It feels like every time we play it...

**Kana:** You summon it...

**David:** Something happens and that'll make me subconsciously want to do "The King." It sucks this happens once a month now. That song we wrote four years ago is pertinent again.

**Jay:** I remember thinking that song was tight when I wasn't in the band.

**Kana:** "The King" was my favorite one; it's like a Southern, stompy song.

**Todd:** Can you tell readers the origin of the phrase "Don't Mess with Texas"?

**Kana:** It's an anti-littering campaign.

**Todd:** It's taken a life of its own beyond litter.

**David:** For sure. I learned that from this band. (The Xetas have a T-shirt, "Don't Mess with Xetas.")

**Jay:** They fine you a lot of money if you litter.

**Kana:** I was always involved in my school with Earth Day. The litter pick up.

**Jay:** We did that with the Y.

**Kana:** That was my Christmas at school. I loved picking up trash. I do it today as a hobby. I pick up litter at the park by my house.

**Jennifer:** I do too, totally.

**Kana:** So I take two doggie poop bags.







**Dave Smalley & The Bandoleros**  
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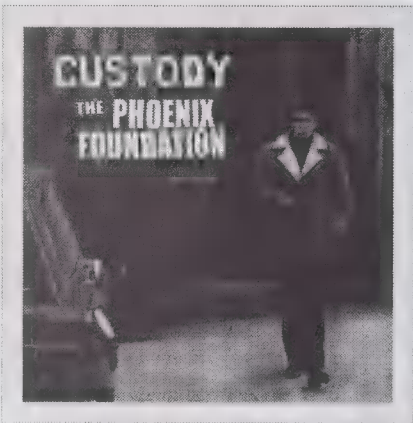
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**United Snakes EP**  
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One is for trash and one is for dog poop. I'm obsessed with picking up litter. We'll go to towns. People will be, "Did you like Philly?" "I love Philly, but there's so much fucking trash everywhere."

**David:** Philthadelphia.

**Kana:** Trash Town.

**David:** Where the fuck are the city trash cans?

**Jay:** Because it was made in the 1700s, they just threw it on the ground.

**David:** "Eat it."

**Kana:** I don't get road rage, but if I see someone throw trash out of their car...

**David:** Trash rage.

**Jennifer:** The other day, I threw carrot nub out the window. The only reason I threw it out; it's biodegradable.

**Kana:** Okay, my argument against the carrot, the food items, is that it attracts wildlife to the highway that then get hit by the cars. You want to know why there are so many skunks and rabbits and turtles on the side of the road?

**Jennifer:** That is a very good point.

**David:** You fucking monster.

**Kana:** This is the level of neurosis about trash I have.

**Jennifer:** I'm a huge animal lover and I would never want that. I will stop doing it. I guess the other day, I was just playing fast and loose.

**David:** Livin' on the edge!

**Kana:** The fun part about intersectionality is that there's a million ways you can be anxious about a situation. [laughter]

**David:** Yeah, that's the fun thing. Pick your poison.

**Kana:** Let it loose. Just be anxious about whatever thing you want to follow. Just try your best.

**Todd:** Let's talk about rats, a recurring Xetas theme, and your mascot.

**Kana:** They're just cute and lovable.

**David:** I just assumed everyone's had rat problems.

**Jennifer:** I volunteer at the animal shelter and I met some naked rats there. They're so cute!

**David:** The house we lived in that got sold out from under us when we first started Xetas; when we living together, it was riddled with rats. They sounded like bowling balls. I don't mind them. I spent months trying to catch this mouse by any means necessary. He evaded me and then the last night I was in the house, it was just me and my dog, and he walked in the middle of floor, made eye contact, and mocked me. Frank usually freaks out if he sees anything and he was totally chill. "You know what, dude? You win. It's your house now." [laughter]

**Kana:** I would hear them, but my dog was a wuss. He'd never go for it. One time I was like, "Dude, look, they're in the cabinet. I'm going to open the door. When they run out, you're going to get it, okay?" I one hundred percent didn't think he was going to do it. I opened the cabinet, my dog stuck his head in there, and this rat ran out: "Haa, I'm outside!" And my dog was chomp! then "Ahh!" Spat it out, stared at it, then looked at me. "Good boy." He chomped it again. Then, he's like, "No I don't want to do this." It was dead... and that was the cover of our demo. It was sad.

**David:** I'm vegan but I originally wanted to have a dead rat on a plate for some reason.

**Kana:** We were trying to find a rat that had died of natural causes.

**David:** It was a better idea to make a model rat for the cover of *The Redeemer*, to do it the special effects way.

**Todd:** Why are you so polite?

**Kana:** My grandpa used to always say, "Manners don't cost anything, but they buy you a lot." It doesn't cost you anything to be a good person or treat people with kindness and respect, but that will put you in a lot of really good situations and buy you a lot more time and respect and opportunity. If you invest in how you treat people and in your manners—which is everything from "please" and "thank you" to being on time for your shows, respecting other people's time—that can

put you in a lot of really fun situations. That goes for your job or music or friendship, but I think it's especially true in bands because of that community. That's the dorky kernel of it.

**Todd:** So you have self-identified as control freaks. Let your control freak flag fly. I do have one concern, though. I watched your tour video (*There Is No Exit Here*) and you have the organizational chart for the van. Why is it on a dry-erase board?

**Kana:** It's written in Sharpie.

**David:** You check it with the dry-erase.

**Kana:** But then you can still get an alcohol wipe and you can wipe it clean so for the next tour, you can re-Sharpie it.

**Todd:** Because there are going to be improvements.

**David:** When we were booking our West Coast tour after *The Tower*, Kana had the big dry-erase board that had all of the info on it. I was like, "Man, it'd be great if there was a miniature version of this to have all the van stuff. Little, portable." Kana was like, "Yeah. They do make those." I'm just such a fucking idiot. [laughter] "I'll go buy them."

**Jennifer:** You were thinking, "I have the next great idea."

**David:** "Guys, I invented something crazy." I'm the least organized person ever; to me that's such a stroke of genius. People who aren't messes know that those exist. It's hard to gauge how much we're control freaks because Gerard lets us do what we want anyway, so there's never any push back at all.

**Kana:** No one's ever said no to us, which is maybe dangerous.

**David:** We originally didn't want to show our faces or give our full names in any of the press stuff.

**Kana:** Let's see how far we can get without trying to sell ourselves. It was an experiment and I think we were like, "We'll probably cave in eventually."

**David:** And Gerard, very politely, was like, "No pressure, but if you guys wanted to show what you look like, do a press photo that's not all fucked up... You don't have to. It might help us sell some records." We're like, "Fuck it. All right." He didn't want to step on our toes because he knows if we didn't want to do it, "Fuck no!"

**Kana:** I had a lot of paranoia when we started because my other band had broken up and we were known as one of those "the all-women punk band bands"—there's like three of us.

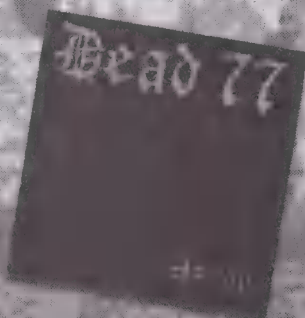
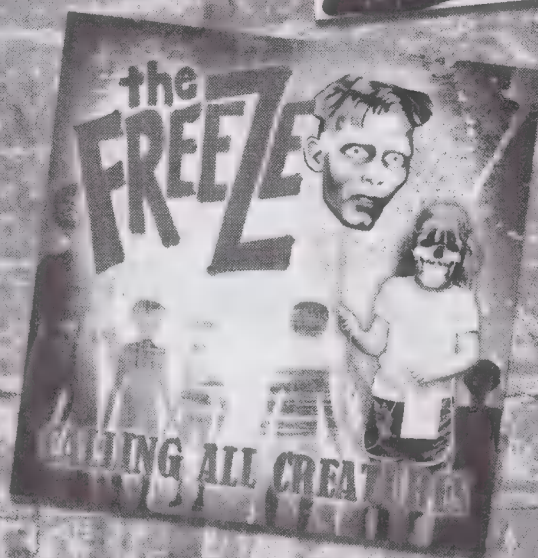
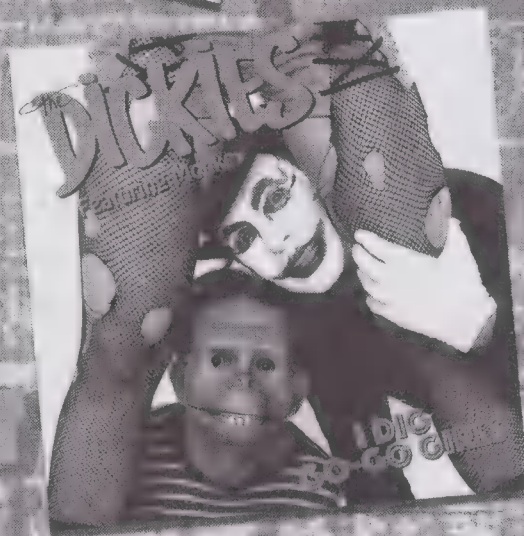
**Todd:** In Austin.

**Kana:** Yeah. So when we broke up, I was really nervous that anything I did after that was going to be, "Ex-female-fronted punk, ex-Mistress Kana Harris is making this band femme-fronted." I just wanted to be known for my playing and being a good bandmate. I don't want people to like the band because I'm a woman. I want them to like my music and then, "Cool, she's



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# I'M NOT GOING TO BE MAD AT MY PARENTS ANYMORE BECAUSE I'M MAD AT THIS WHOLE SYSTEM NOW...

a woman and I identify with that." I was paranoid it was going to turn into this sound bite for the band forever.

**David:** I wanted people to listen to it first without any notion of why they should like it for any reason other than it sounds good. We didn't want people to latch onto female-as-a-genre.

**Todd:** On the worst days, it's a ghetto.

**Jennifer:** I think we should all start saying, "It's an all-male band."

**David:** The tide has shifted so much in Austin—people will say that almost as a caveat. "It's all dudes... but they're really good."

**Jay:** People will be like, "Super Thief, my favorite boy band." I like that.

**David:** It's just as silly for a band to be all white dudes as it is for any other combination.

**Kana:** A lot of people, even though they act cool about it, they do have this weird feeling of resentment—and I only say this because I've dated guys I've had to confront and be like, "Do you just have a problem with this?" They'll think, "Oh, you just got that show because they're trying to book it with women on them. They need a token." That's really hurtful to hear. That's another reason I was really paranoid about that. I had dated some people in the hardcore scene and when Xetas was first starting and I would ask, "Hey, can we get on this bill with your bigger, much more famous hardcore band?" and they would say, "Oh, it's not a good fit." To me, was it because we weren't '77/'80s worship, studs and spikes punk? Or was it because of some weird threatening-to-you thing? Because we're doing something that's not following a formula and still excelling at it? I just always felt if they know it's me, we're not going to be accepted. I have to disguise myself in ■ way, which is fucked up.

**David:** I'm in my thirties. I was in a hardcore band when I was a teenager. I'm stoked that young kids are still doing that, but my band's not going to sound like that. I'm not that youthful, angsty person. I'd feel like a phony trying to be in a hardcore band just so I could be in a hardcore band.

**Kana:** When I listen to that stuff, I feel things, but it's not like I did when I was ■ teenager. When that new Courtney Barnett came out, I listened to it on repeat. "This is me as an album!" That's teenage, deep-listening type thing. When I listen to Minor Threat, I don't really feel those things. It's more like time traveling, visiting that fun, happy time; rather than *in* it. There are a couple bands—a night drive, you put on *Flip Your Wig* really loud, I'm like, "Yes!" Minutemen will get me anytime, honestly.

**Jennifer:** I do like to see a good hardcore band live. As soon as they start playing really fast. [Smiles and claps.]

**Kana:** Live is different. Loud, fast, yes! Go!

**David:** I don't feel I could make it convincingly by singing, "Fuck you, dad." I can still observe it and appreciate it. That's always going to be where my roots are at.

**Kana:** I also think that's why we end up writing songs like "The Gaze" and "The King" because that's the "Fuck you, dad" that we're coming up against in our thirties. "Okay, I'm not going to be mad at my parents anymore because I'm mad at this whole system now."

**Jay:** The system is our parents.

**Kana:** The broader human condition—we're all fucked. We're all going to die. Let's all talk about it.

**Todd:** I have one last question and I think it'll provide an answer to this.

**David:** Are you going to solve this? I'm all ears.

**Todd:** No. But it's the human interaction in the *Great British Baking Show*. People are put into a competition and instead of everyone going for one another's fucking throat, you have everyone rooting for everyone else.

**Jennifer:** Helping.

**Jay:** It's about the thing you're making, yeah.

**Todd:** It's the process and the community who's around you at the time. I do say it partially in jest, but the show does have cultural signifiers suggesting there can be a different way. Everyone has difference, everyone has internal challenges, and if we actually try to work with one another and make things better, even small things, can have a large cultural significance.

**Kana:** That's why I'm obsessed with my two favorite iconic American shows: *Hoarders* and *Kitchen Nightmares*. You think that *Hoarders* is about looking at terrible messes and dead kittens. Or you think *Kitchen Nightmares* is about chef Gordon Ramsay yelling, but what both shows really are is people hitting an emotional wall, breaking down, reaching out to people they love for help, those people rising to meet them, and them overcoming a difficult situation by listening to each other. I think that's beautiful and a lot of people think I'm crazy. There's crying and families reuniting and mending and people confronting problems they've had for years and years that they've buried and are afraid to confront. And they're able to do this on this fucking TV show? That's so bizarre and wholly American in this way I can't describe.

**David:** Sometimes, when you've got some dude screaming at you with a camera pointed at your face, you start to realize shit's gotten to ■ certain point. [laughter]

**Kana:** I don't like the conflict leading up to it, but what I do love is watching that person be like, "I'm doing the thing that I was doing. It's bad and now I have to do the other way. Look at me learning." That's the beautiful moment of the show and that's what I wish people would do more with conflict instead of, "It's good. I dunno," because that's how you get a kitchen nightmare. That's how you get a hoard.

**David:** That's how you get a fucking dead kitten in your corner.

**Kana:** Anyways, I think about this stuff all the time.

**David:** Everyone needs to stop being an extremist about whatever their fucking opinion is. You gotta listen sometimes. It pains people—they think that they're losing by listening and that's not how that works.

**Jennifer:** I'm already not going to throw any more carrot nubs out the window.

**David:** If nothing else comes from this—no more nubs.

**Kana:** It's such a simple, weird, stupid thing, but when I was opening the store, people want to give you their advice. This lady who I know named Wendy who has a store, she came over. "I just want to come give you my advice. You're gonna make mistakes." I was like, "Damn, girl." I kinda needed to hear that. Over the last week or so, I've had stuff where it's come up: "Why'd you do it like this?" and I want to get really defensive, then I'm like, "I didn't know and I'm open, so I'm figuring it out. Sorry." And they're like, "Okay, cool." You're just going to make mistakes and that's life. Some people can't get their heads around that.

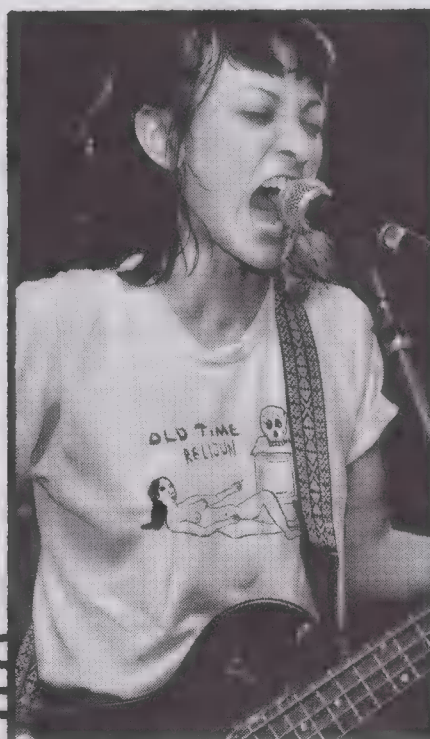
**David:** Being able to accept your faults is probably the best thing ■ person can work on, because they're not going to go away.

**Jay:** That's how you grow.

**Kana:** The few times we've ever been in road fights or disagree about something, usually it's me being, "Okay, I know I'm reacting like this because I do that, but also you love me because of me, so let's get past this thing I'm doing that's annoying." You work through it but you also have to accept some things about people sometimes.



## THE SYSTEM IS OUR PARENTS.





# WERNER PAUL





IN 1986, A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD PITTSBURGH KID WITH A GUITAR, BOOM BOX, AND TAPE RECORDER CRANKED OUT SOME LO-FI ROCK SONGS ABOUT POTATO BORSCHT, A DEAF NUN, AND HIS FATHER'S TOE.

THIRTY-TWO YEARS LATER, WEIRD PAUL STILL GOES BY THE SAME NAME, STILL RECORDS FROM HIS HOME, AND STILL STRIVES FOR LO-FI. DESPITE THE SONGS BEING COMPOSED AND PERFORMED BETTER, THEY ARE STILL VERY SILLY: "THIS GUY'S GOT A BONE DISEASE," "I GOT DRUNK AT CHUCK E. CHEESE," AND "JOLLY RANCHER (STUCK IN YOUR HAIR)." HE ALSO SOMEHOW MANAGED TO WRITE ONE OF THE CATCHIEST SONGS EVER WRITTEN ABOUT PEANUT BUTTER AND HAS RECORDED FIFTEEN-PLUS FULL-LENGTH RECORDS, WITH ONE BEING RELEASED ON HOMESTEAD RECORDS.

BESIDES BEING AN ECCENTRIC ROCKER, HE ALSO HAS BEEN RECORDING HIS LIFE VIA CASSETTE RECORDERS, VIDEO CAMERAS, AND HIS JOURNALS SINCE HE WAS VERY YOUNG. WEIRD PAUL POSTS THESE MEMORIES ON YOUTUBE. THEY ARE ENTRANCING AND POKE AT EVERY NOSTALGIC SENSOR IN YOUR BRAIN.

I MOSTLY WANTED TO TALK TO PAUL ABOUT HIS MUSIC, BUT WE ENDED UP COVERING HIS INTERNET PRESENCE, DANIEL JOHNSTON, WEBTV, AND THE NEW DOCUMENTARY ABOUT HIM.

INTRO AND INTERVIEW BY RICK Y.

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MOFELL, NIFFER DESMOND, JAMES FIX LA LOFTS, AND WEIRD PAUL  
LAYOUT BY DYLAN DAVIS

**Rick:** I know you keep really good track of your life with a calendar. When was the first time you recorded as "Weird Paul"?

**Weird Paul:** I could look up the exact date on the computer if I wanted to get up.

**Rick:** You could always give it to me later.

**Weird Paul:** I might as well look it up while we're talking. It would be very easy to do. [Gets up.] I always take interviews off track of what they are talking about pretty quickly and easily. [laughs] My goal here is to eventually have a virtual timeline of my life online and you could just look up anything I've done—even down to what clothes I was wearing on a specific date.

But for now, other than my written journals, I can look it up on Facebook in my activity log and search. I post things all the time about my past. The first time I ever wrote something was April 3, 1984. It was a parody of the Cars song "You Might Think." It was called "What You Might Think of Mr. Lebedda." I had a history teacher named Mr. Lebedda and I couldn't stand him. I actually wrote it in his class. I still have the lyric sheet and everything.

I wasn't Weird Paul yet. I wrote it as "The Paul Band," but I recorded it like all the other songs I wrote about my teachers. They were all parodies. When I started recording those songs in June 1984, that's when I started calling myself Weird Paul.

**Rick:** What were you recording with?

**Weird Paul:** The way we recorded—and I say "we" because my sister was doing background vocals—we went to my parents' bathroom. I heard if you didn't have a studio, the best sound quality is in the bathroom

because of the tiles. I would press play on the boom box and record on a tape recorder and we would just sing right over top the original song with the new lyrics. We would do that until we filled up both sides of the tape and that was the album.

**Rick:** What was the chorus to "What You Might Think of Mr. Lebedda"?

**Weird Paul:** Each chorus was different because each chorus in the Cars song was different. I'm looking up the lyrics on Facebook right now. [Eyeballs Facebook] "You might think he's foolish, what he puts you through. You might think he's crazy, he just wants to fail you."

**Rick:** What a jerk! I hate this guy already! He's probably dead.

**Weird Paul:** He may be! It's very possible—him and Mr. Deal, who I wrote fifty percent of the other songs about. That was my math teacher. He was worse than Mr. Lebedda.

**Rick:** You do keep very good track of your calendar. I've picked that up from your work.

**Weird Paul:** Yup, I got the whole history. Not many people can ascribe to that.

**Rick:** Oh there was a judge recently who said he could ascribe to that. (Brett Kavanaugh, SCOTUS.)

**Weird Paul:** That's true. But on my June 1982 calendar I marked Barry Manilow's birthday. That's where you can see where my mind was.

**Rick:** You had a very unique DIY way of distributing your music in your tween days. How was this done?

**Weird Paul:** When I first started recording the cassettes, I would just let friends at my

school borrow them because I only had one copy. If somebody lost or broke it, I would have been screwed. Eventually somebody did borrow it from me and didn't give it back. So I had to re-record that entire album.

I did that up until '87 and then started dubbing copies of them. I put out an album of all original material. I was trying to make it where I thought it was legal. That's why I called it *Weird Paul—In Case of Fire Throw This In (The Legal One)*. I even got it copyrighted and I started selling copies to friends. I sold a lot of copies to kids at school, and that's how it went for awhile. And then there wasn't much going on. Recently, I dug out the issue of *Maximum Rock'n'roll* from 1989 where I put in an ad where I tried to get people into my cassette. I had a few people write to me. But what really made the difference was I opened for Beat Happening. Calvin Johnson saw me and started buying my cassettes to sell them in the K catalogue.

**Rick:** Oooh, nice.

**Weird Paul:** Calvin first started doing that in late '88. We put out a 7" in 1990 and he was selling that too. So, eventually, it's because of that, people from Dutch East India found out about me and then they started getting cassettes and records from me for their catalogue. That's how Homestead Records eventually got a hold of me.

**Rick:** I had heard you used to have a signup sheet at your school where you could register to borrow the Weird Paul cassettes.

**Weird Paul:** The borrowing was just word of mouth. But I did have a signup sheet to buy a copy. I wasn't in the same classes as





JENNIFER McFEELY

PEOPLE SAYS IT'S  
IT'S MORE THAN  
MEMORIES YOU'RE  
OF WHO YOU ARE.

everybody and I had some advertisements in a couple of classrooms. People would sign up and I would dub off as many as I needed for the next school day.

**Rick:** Weren't you thirteen when you did all this?

**Weird Paul:** No, no. I was sixteen. I guess I had a pretty good idea on how to distribute something like that. I didn't know people were making cassettes already all over the world. I saw that people were making albums and realized I could make an album if I did it on cassettes, because it was the only recordable media for a kid like me at the time. Eventually I found out that Daniel Johnston—along with tons of other people—was doing this way before I was.

**Rick:** Were you familiar with Daniel Johnston at this time?

**Weird Paul:** Not quite. I don't think I heard Daniel Johnston until I was eighteen.

**Rick:** Did you ever pull the thing people do where they just call up Daniel Johnston to hang out?

**Weird Paul:** Ha! I don't know if that still happens or not.

**Rick:** I had friends who did that years ago. They just went to his house and asked if he wanted to hang out. They went to an antique mall and Johnston asked one of them to buy him a Casper comic book.

**Weird Paul:** That's great. There are so many great stories about him buying records and comic books. Like in that documentary (*The Devil and Daniel Johnston*) where he bought that really rare Beatles record and left it on the street. When I met him the first time—which was like eighteen years ago—he had bought a whole stack of comic books and spilled a glass of ice water on them.

**Rick:** Oh geez!

**Weird Paul:** He has a lot of bad luck with buying stuff. But I've only hung out with him at shows. I opened for him a couple of times. There are a lot of weird intersecting things with me and Daniel Johnston over the years. He was going to play a party after I got married in '91 and had to back out last minute.

**Rick:** Wild! I'm interested in the record release shows you used to have as a teen, specifically the ones at your house and nobody came.

**Weird Paul:** I didn't really publicize them in any way and didn't really expect anybody to come to them. And I was actually frightened that someone would actually show up. I was really shy and nervous and didn't really have any friends at that point. I think most of the kids who borrowed my cassettes were just doing it to make fun of them. I would put a sign outside my house saying I was having a record release show. I was just trying to do things how I thought other bands did them in the real world.

**Rick:** But there was one that people actually came to, am I right?

**Weird Paul:** My family came to them but I don't remember anybody else coming. I would set up concerts and I started doing them in '85. I started handing out flyers with my address at school and nobody came for the longest time. And finally, a couple of kids came in October '87. I did a show at my parents' house and *that was it*. Those couple of kids came and they started spreading the word. They were like, "Oh man you have to go over to Weird Paul's house. He's having a concert this weekend. You have to see what he's doing." And every show after that there were more and more people. At one point, there were sixty people or something.

**Rick:** That's awesome. Sixty people at your parents' house!?

**Weird Paul:** Probably forty people at my parents' house before we started doing them in a kid's garage down the street. There were so many people and it got really crazy, but it was a lot of fun.

**Rick:** I always thought it was cool back when I was a kid and there was a house show where the parents were actually there. I appreciate cool parents.

**Weird Paul:** His parents were cool. But we did have to stop the shows because some kid broke their automatic garage door opener.

**Rick:** It only takes one kid to ruin shows at someone's parents' house.

**Weird Paul:** It really does.

**Rick:** When was your first show outside of someone's house?

**Weird Paul:** [without blinking] It was October 15, 1988. I'm making a video about it

right now to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of my first show.

**Rick:** Wow! Where was it and who was it with?

**Weird Paul:** It was at a place called the Foundry that only lasted for two months. I originally was booked to play there in September with Happy Flowers and a band called Scrawl that I was a big fan of. And it was canceled because there were problems with the venue. It was a warehouse that didn't really have a license to operate and the cops came and shut it down. I was at the Ramones show when someone called my parents house to tell me that the show was canceled. But they had another show for me to play with Beat Happening and Girl Trouble, another band that was on K Records.

**Rick:** This was your *first* out-of-house show?! That's a big deal!

**Weird Paul:** Yup. (You can watch Weird Paul's entire first show and reflection of it on his YouTube channel.)

**Rick:** Other than doing Weird Paul stuff, were you ever in any other bands?

**Weird Paul:** Not really. I started a band with my sister called Othello. We thought we should do a band that was named after a game, like Hüsker Dü. We put out an album of that. I put out an album with my other sister and maybe my brother, so I was mainly doing other songs with my family. They were usually writing the lyrics and I was writing the music. I've been in very few other bands for the last thirty years.

**Rick:** Throw some names at me. Did any of them tour or put out records?

**Weird Paul:** Not many. My friend Scott Fry and I have a band called 57 Big End Halos and that's on Bandcamp. And my keyboard player Ben Blanchett put out some albums with just me and him. We write and compose some songs together. Other than subbing for people on one show, I haven't played with many other bands. I got on stage with Sebadoh and did a song with them. Stuff like that.

I've always wanted to be a member of another band and for a long time it was my goal. But now it doesn't really matter. I'm Weird Paul.

**Rick:** Were you still a teenager when you started touring?



# NOSTALGIA BUT I THINK THAT BECAUSE OF THOSE GETTING BACK A PART PART OF YOUR LIFE.



NIFFER DESMOND

**Weird Paul:** No. The first time I did a tour was in 1991 and I was twenty.

**Rick:** And how did that go?

**Weird Paul:** It didn't go great because the album (*Low Fidelity, High Anxiety*) was supposed to be out in June or July. And we were on tour in mid-July and the album still wasn't out. Nobody had it and we didn't have any copies to sell or anything.

**Rick:** And when you say "We," you mean a full band?

**Weird Paul:** It was me and Manny Theiner, my drummer who booked me with Beat Happening in '88. He still books shows and I'm playing with Bob Log III in a couple of weeks here. That will be really crazy because it will be me playing shows for thirty years in Pittsburgh and Manny booking shows here.

**Rick:** Cool!

**Weird Paul:** He was my drummer for about two years, I think. We went on tour with other local bands because I didn't drive because I didn't have a driver's license and neither did Manny. So we had to get other bands to go on tour with us to do all the driving. The first show we did was at the New Music Seminar at the Knitting Factory (Brooklyn, N.Y.) which they did every year for a while. Every indie record label would have a showcase for all the records they were putting out around that time. So we played there with Sebadoh and a few other Homestead bands. That show was huge. People were going to every one of those shows. They wanted to see all these bands. There were all kinds of crazy people there, like King Missile and Sonic Youth. Everyone who was living in New York was running around to all these shows. It was incredible.

But then the shows got progressively not as good. We went to Washington, D.C. and that was alright. And we played a show in North Carolina that really didn't go well at all. We didn't have the albums but I had the album cover. I held it up after our set and said, "This is our album; it should be out any day now." and somebody in the crowd said, "Wow, Pittsburgh must be really lame."

**Rick:** Ouch!

**Weird Paul:** They were not really having it. The second tour we went out to the Midwest. We went to Iowa City and that's about as far as

we got. And there was one person who came to that show. It wasn't a great experience.

**Rick:** That's usually a problem with the two unknown band tours.

**Weird Paul:** We did get to play with Happy Flowers in North Carolina and that was good. I don't think that landscape has changed very much. It's still hit and miss.

**Rick:** Yeah, I think that's a problem with booking shows for bands who you think will bring folks without much effort. A lot of times you're wrong, like when you book an "ex members of" band and assume everyone's going to be stoked. I once set up a show for Kevin Seconds (7 Seconds) and thought people would be tearing down the walls and nobody came.

**Weird Paul:** Wow. I feel like promoters have the wrong idea that I am going to bring a bunch of people out. They would be lucky if that was the case. But I don't have a built-in audience if we play some random city.

**Rick:** Did you ever have a point of consistent touring?

**Weird Paul:** No. In fact, I haven't been on tour since. After that tour I got married and my plan was to keep touring and do lots of cool stuff, but it was a bad time. My marriage wasn't a great time in my life. Financially, it was really bad. There was just no money to do anything. I couldn't even take off work, otherwise the bills would not have been paid. So touring wasn't even an option.

I'm not a booking agent; I'm terrible at that kind of thing. It just turns my brain into mush when I have to figure out how do I get here from there, and I have to be here at this time... and I've never found anybody who has been interested in doing that for me. And I'm not a good promoter. I always said if I was a good salesman, I would be famous right now. I just do my thing and people find out about me. Eventually, I would love to go on tour. I feel like it will happen and it's going to happen at some point, but I'm not gonna rush it.

**Rick:** I like the way you sell your records by making video advertisements about them on YouTube. How does that pan out for you?

**Weird Paul:** It pans out alright. We use whatever tools we have to work with. Before,

it was mailorder when I was doing it in the late '80s/early '90s. I had a printed-out catalogue that I would send out to people.

**Rick:** Oh, I have one of those stuffed in the *Low Fidelity, High Anxiety* records. I saw the Weird Paul VHS tape and wondered if that still exists.

**Weird Paul:** Oh yeah! I do still sell that on my website. And I have to ask people who order it if they want a DVD or VHS. And they say "Oh, the VHS! I can't believe I can still buy a VHS in 2018!"

So now things are changed. Nobody uses mailorder anymore. I get on every social media because every one is used by different people. Some people will never set foot on Facebook and some people only use Twitter. You have to get on every one of them and you have to figure out how each of them works to your advantage. Facebook will throttle posts a certain way. You can't put links, especially YouTube links, in the statuses because almost nobody will see it. So you have to see what social media works best with what kind of content. And then, when you figure that out, you can make the specific kind of content you want to make.

So on Facebook, I put up a picture of the record. I won't even say how much it is. You have to use pictures and very few words. And then when people ask in the comments, that's where you can tell them how to get it.

YouTube has my biggest audience following because I have 20,000 subscribers on there. I'm definitely gonna make a video because I'll at least get a good portion of those people to at least know I have something out. You have to be specific for everything. It's way harder than printing a catalogue with everything on it. [laughs]

**Rick:** It works though, right?

**Weird Paul:** It does work.

**Rick:** Who is in the Weird Paul band now?

**Weird Paul:** My band right now is Ben Blanchett on the Keytar which he put together. It's a regular Casio keyboard but he puts a strap on it so he's playing it like a keytar. He has a broom taped to the back of it so he can hold it like an actual Keytar.

**Rick:** I have made that very instrument!

**Weird Paul:** There you go. So he plays that and we call it the Keytar. I have a couple



who are married on the rhythm section—John Dowling on the drums and Pam Dowling on the bass. That specific lineup of the Weird Paul Rock Band has been together for about two and a half years. Ben has been in the band the longest. He has been in it since late 2006.

**Rick:** Have you ever played solo? Like karaoke style?

**Weird Paul:** Almost every month I will play one solo show. I'll do that because sometimes the venue, like a coffee house, isn't big enough for a band. Sometimes my band isn't available, like one member can't do it. And I still have another way to perform.

All the other bands I was in before this one, we would finally get a show. We didn't really get a lot of offers to play back then. Somebody wouldn't be able to do it and we would have to turn it down.

Now I like that I have this backup plan. It's a completely different show than with the band. I made a schematic for doing a show as one person. With four people you don't have to worry about keeping the audience's attention too much. You have four people to look at and all the music is being produced live. But when you have one person, you have to keep the audience's attention all by yourself. So I've had to come up with ways for doing that.

**Rick:** And out of your billions of songs, what are the oldest ones you keep playing?

**Weird Paul:** The last show we did was a week ago and we were playing songs as far back as '86. We still play a lot of old songs.

Nowadays, if we're playing a show and it's a pretty short time for bands on the bill, we stick mostly with the newer songs that are popular. They wanna hear all the songs that are popular, like "What a Meal" and "Peanut Butter Recall." But I always throw in at least one or two obscure songs from the '80s or '90s because I know somebody will be excited to hear them. I don't want to go to a show and see a band play the same set every time. I don't think that's fun. If it were me watching I would be, "Is that it? You're only going to play the hits? Play something else!"

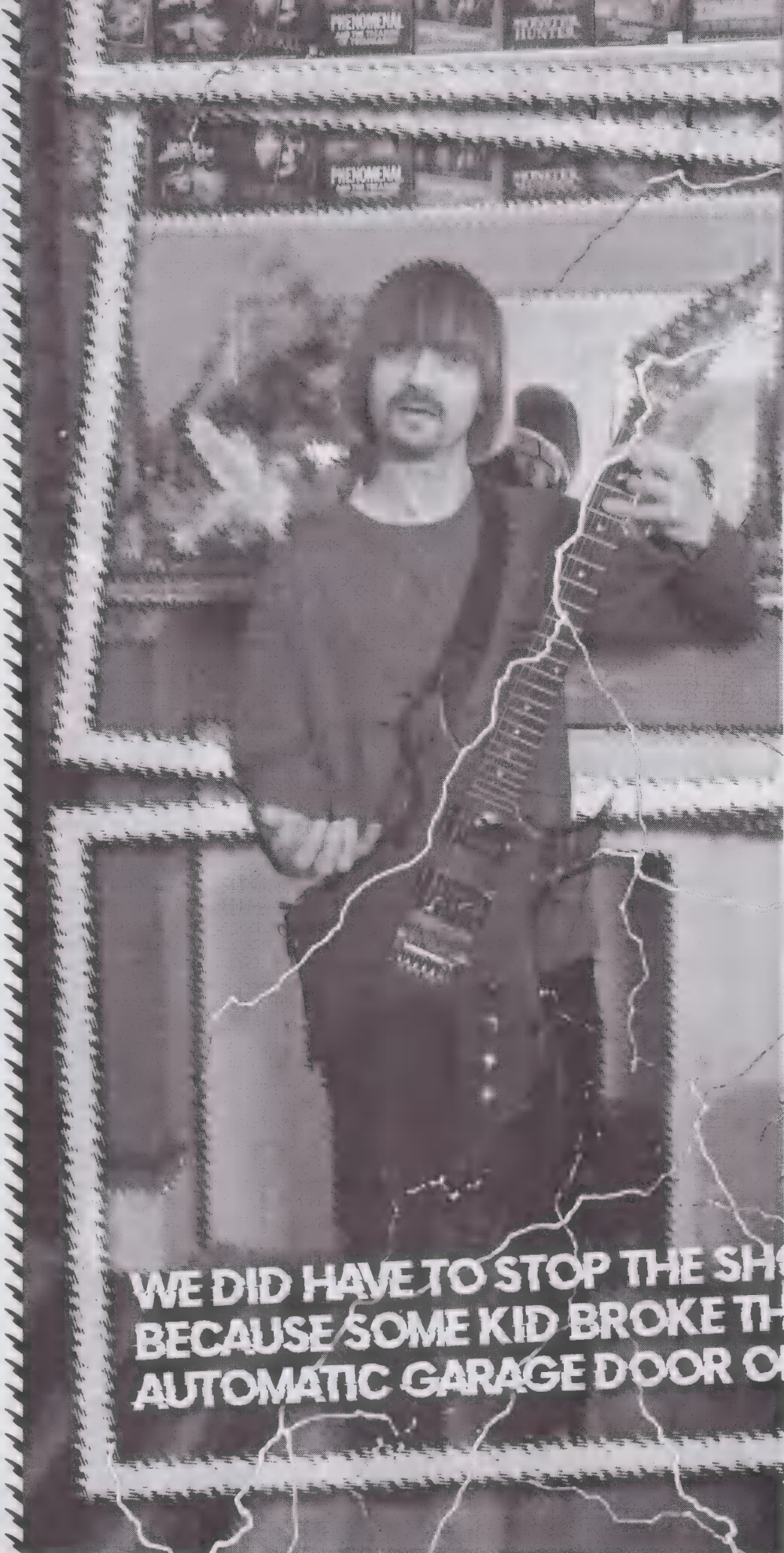
**Rick:** If I'm remembering this correctly, Andrew WK originally played solo and then got a full band when he became way more popular, but is now periodically doing the solo thing again. I thought that was interesting.

**Weird Paul:** That is interesting. At the time I had a mindset on what the band show was and I thought I had no way of doing a solo show that people would be entertained by. But I started seeing how people were doing solo shows and entertaining the audience and keeping people captivated. And I thought I can definitely do that! There are a lot of people doing it now and they do it well. If you don't do it well, you're screwed. [laughs]

**Rick:** If the PA blows out you're also screwed. I've seen that happen a couple of times with those bands.

**Weird Paul:** Or your iPod dies.

**Rick:** I have some friends called Best Friends who did the pre-recorded solo style.





OWS  
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PENER.

JENNIFER McFEELEY

And while they were traveling somebody stole their laptop, which was the only access they had to their songs at the time.

**Weird Paul:** Man, that's awful. That would be a nightmare!

**Rick:** There are two friggin' documentaries about you. Tell me about them!

**Weird Paul:** The first one (*Weird Paul—A Lo Fidelity Documentary*) came out in 2005. I think it was filmed in 2002 and 2003. That was before YouTube existed and that documentary is primarily about my music and not much about me making videos back in the '80s.

**Weird Paul:** The new documentary (*Will Work for Views*) is primarily about the YouTube videos. They are two completely different movies.

**Rick:** Same subject but about two completely different things. Do they talk about the music in the new documentary?

**Weird Paul:** More than I expected, actually. When I finally got to see it a few months ago, I wasn't expecting to see anything about the music. It focuses mostly on how much work it is trying to become known through the internet—because that's the only way to be known at this point if you are an independent person who doesn't have a press team, managers, or agents behind you. It shows how difficult it is to get seen because there is such an *extreme* amount of stuff online. You're just buried. You have to get lucky to get people to see you and you have to be educated on the best ways to get to people.

**Rick:** I have this theory that YouTube is going to implode soon and I hope that all the people who I enjoy on it move on to better things.

**Weird Paul:** It's possible. To be honest, I'm a little tired of YouTube. I've taken a self-imposed break from it. I'm still making a couple of videos a month but I was making a lot more before. I haven't put out a new solo album in five years. I'm sick of that. That's far too long for me.

YouTube has this bot that goes around now to decide whether your videos can be monetized or not. I don't like posting a video and the bot saying "Sorry, you're not going to get any ads on this." Making videos is fun, but I also need to get some sort of return for it. It's not worth the time I keep putting into it. Some people just sit in front of the camera and just start blabbering away. I don't do that. I like to make real content that would be something I want to watch.

**Rick:** Edited content.

**Weird Paul:** Yep. I want to make content you could watch on television.

**Rick:** You had a cable access show. Do you still compile your videos for cable access?

**Weird Paul:** Well, it wasn't for cable access. It was actually for broadcast television.

**Rick:** Whoa! I apologize.

**Weird Paul:** No problem. But there is a difference. There's nothing wrong with cable access. And in retrospect that's maybe where I belonged, but I had a friend who works at a local station and he talked the programmers there into airing my show. My friend took the

content I had on YouTube and made shows out of it with a linear story. We filmed new stuff to put in them—some effects, sounds, and songs. We had that on for two seasons and I never knew if anybody was watching it or not. You don't get Nielsen ratings for little, tiny broadcast stations.

The show went off the air because the station got bought out. Small stations were selling their bandwidth to phone companies for an insane amount of money! But ever since then, I've had people at shows or on the street say, "I never missed your TV show" and I was like, "Wow, really!? You were watching that?"

**Rick:** What time did it come on?

**Weird Paul:** It was in the early evening, 7 or 8 PM.

**Rick:** Really!? Primetime!

**Weird Paul:** Yep! We would pre-up *I Love Lucy* or something like that. [laughs] I would tape them when they would air. So they would be shot with VHS, then broadcast digitally, and then I would record them right back onto VHS. I thought that was pretty funny.

So we got those all still sitting around. They've never been on the internet or aired anywhere else. I've got an ad agency out here in Pittsburgh representing me and they are working on getting those shows licensed somewhere. Where, it doesn't matter. Our guy is doing his best to get somebody on it. And that would be great. I can keep making content for people to enjoy and I could be getting paid for it. He says one day I'm going to wake up and I'm going to have a deal. I'm just waiting for that day to happen. I can't wait to make more of those.

**Rick:** That will be what the third documentary is about.

**Weird Paul:** That's what I told the guy. I want to make a movie that covers how I documented my life. That's something neither of the documentaries have done.

**Rick:** You have really documented your life so well.

**Weird Paul:** Initially, I wasn't making videos to document my life. I have been keeping track of my life. I don't think I did it specifically to look back on, but maybe I did with my journals. I was just copying what I had seen. This was before *Americas Funniest Home Videos* and those types of shows. People were making videos and there were a few different ways you would see that on TV. They were mostly specials; they weren't weekly series. I was like, "Oh, I can make content like that and maybe it will be on TV someday." It took thirty years but it did get on TV eventually! [laughs]

**Rick:** You show off a lot of stuff you pick up at thrift stores and what people send you. What in these collections do you hold dear?

**Weird Paul:** The stuff that's the most important to me now is stuff that's the oldest that I didn't keep as much of—drawings or toys from when I was a little, little kid. The thing about this stuff is a lot of it is broken and some are just little pieces. I still remember what the toy looked like. I still have this



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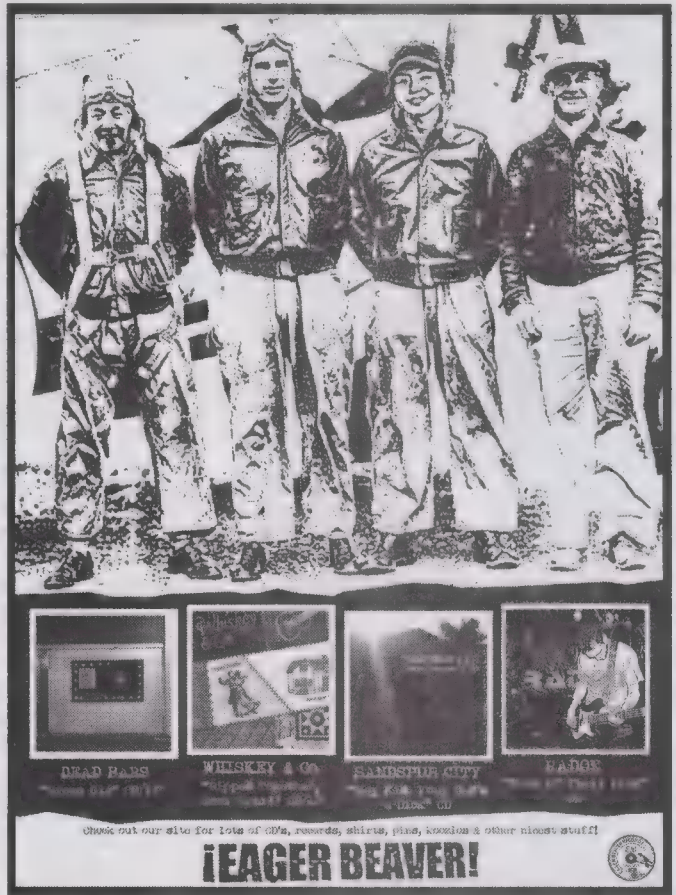
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# IF YOU GO A DAY WITHOUT LEARNING THAT'S A WASTED DAY



JARED FIX LA LOFTS

connection to this tangible thing and that little kid. It's still in there, you know? You can still keep in touch with that.

Memories fade. People tell me I have ■ great memory but I really don't. I just wrote down a lot of stuff and I have a little piece of something. I can say, "Oh, I remember this." As the years go on, you forget everything. Occasionally I will look in my journals and there is just a fragment of a sentence. I have no idea what I was talking about. So now when I write my journals I'm a lot more specific. Instead of saying, "I went for ■ walk," I will write what I saw on that walk. Years from now I will be able to remember that happening.

I like when I find video tapes of old commercials, music videos, and shows taped off TV and stuff like that. Because that's another thing you can't get back. You can watch almost every movie you want now. It's not that special or hard to get a hold of. Maybe you saw a music video when you were twelve and never saw it again because they quit showing it on MTV. You can find a video tape where somebody recorded it and you see it again. And it all comes back. That's what it is. People say it's nostalgia but I think it's more than that. Because of those memories, you're getting back ■ part of who you are, part of your life. That's the most special part of the things I collect.

**Rick:** Do you end up keeping a lot of the stuff you get in the mall or thrift stores?

**Weird Paul:** I keep everything you see in the videos because I paid for it. For me, money is extremely hard to come by. Even now. In the new movie they show that a lot—me trying to figure out how I'm going to pay the bills.

I don't always keep the stuff people send me because I only have so much room. But I don't throw it away or anything like that. First, I offer it to my girlfriend because she is sometimes like, "Oh, I love that!" And she takes it for part of her collection. Then I will offer it to my mother because she will keep almost anything that I don't want. She's where I got the whole, "If it's useful, don't get rid of it." You might as well use it and there's enough garbage in the landfill already.

Everything is just so disposable and there are big hunks of ugly plastic you can buy at every store. Instead of keeping something and using it again, you get rid of it and throw it away. A year later they will be like, "Oh, you know what? I could use that. I'll go get another one." I don't understand that mentality. There's no reason to be making all this waste. That's why I would rather buy something old and cool so it doesn't end up in a landfill and I'll enjoy it for ■ long time.

**Rick:** I will definitely reference what you just said when somebody asks me why I have over four hundred VHS tapes. But back to the music. After playing for thirty-plus years, what do you think is peak Weird Paul? And I know this is a stupid question.

**Weird Paul:** Well, I'll answer it. About ten years ago somebody came up to me and said, "This new stuff is really good. I don't think you have even peaked yet." And I don't feel like I've peaked yet. I think my last album (*Still Going Strong*) is the peak of Weird Paul because I haven't done anything else yet.

**Rick:** And that's what I was trying to get out of you.

**Weird Paul:** Well, you got it.

**Rick:** I think you just keep getting better.

**Weird Paul:** Well, I'm still learning. They're always saying you gotta learn something every day. That's true. If you go ■ day without learning, that's a wasted day. I'm still learning how to be a songwriter and record music the way it sounds in my head. That's the hard part. And right now, it's the closest it's ever been.

**Rick:** You are using conventional recording equipment right now I'm assuming?

**Weird Paul:** Yeah, I stopped using ■ four track in 2005 because it broke and I couldn't find a place to get it serviced. The place that made it had fixed it for me in the past and then the company closed down. At this time I didn't even have ■ computer. I was using WebTV from about 1999 to 2005.

**Rick:** Woah. I didn't even know WebTV was still a thing in 2005.

**Weird Paul:** WebTV only went off the air about six years ago. So at the time I could either buy a computer—and I would have

finally joined the rest of the world—or get another four track. I didn't want to do both. It didn't seem cost efficient for me to buy both things. I decided to get a computer because there's so much more I can do with it.

That's when I started using GarageBand. Up until last year I was still using the most primitive version of it there was. The only reason I moved on was because I lost that version and had to get a newer one. I always just use what I have. I don't have the money to get something new until I have to move on because something breaks or somebody gives me something.

**Rick:** "I have this eighty billion dollar recording studio I just want to give away..."

**Weird Paul:** Well, I'll take it but somebody might complain about it. "Uggh, Paul sold out." If you moved on, people will always like what you did before.

**Rick:** This last question is kind of dumb. Is there anything I forgot to ask that you so badly wanted to answer?

**Weird Paul:** I have to say, I don't get interviewed very much, but fifty percent of the time that's usually the final question.

**Rick:** What the fugg?

**Weird Paul:** People always ask me that.

**Rick:** Forget that I ever asked it. How about this? Hey Paul, ever murdered a man? Huh?

**Weird Paul:** I'm not at liberty to say. [laughs] When I was in high school there was this smartaleck-y kid who was having an argument with the teacher. The teacher had fought in the Korean War and had shrapnel in his leg. The kid was arguing something about the war and the teacher asked the kid, "Oh yeah, how many guys did you kill?" and the kid said "I'm not at liberty to say." [laughs again]

**Rick:** So anything you want to add?

**Weird Paul:** We did a pretty thorough interview. Can't think of anything we missed in the Weird Paul-iverse. Don't let anyone tell you what you are doing is worthless or unimportant. Because that's what you are giving to the world—you are giving the world part of yourself.





# TOP 5s

**Andy Garcia**

1. Haram, *Where Were You on 9/11? 7"*
2. Fatamorgana, *Terra Alta* LP
3. Razorbumps, *...The Cassingle*
4. Vintage Crop, *Company Man 7"*
5. Altar De Fey, *The Insatiable Desire...For More* LP

**Art Ettinger**

- Dead Bars, *Regulars* LP
- The Pathogens, *We're Catchy* LP
- Haram, *Where Were You on 9/11? 7"*
- Giuda, *E.V.A.* LP
- Bad Religion, *Age of Unreason*

**Bill Pinkel**

- Hüsker Dü
- The Coathangers, *The Devil You Know* LP
- The Cowboys, *The Bottom of a Rotten Flower* LP
- Spanish Love Songs, American Steel, and Hot Water Music, live at the Echoplex, tied with *Stay Free: The Story of The Clash* podcast
- Martha, *Love Keeps Kicking* LP

**Chad Williams**

1. Charger, Self-titled 12"
3. The Briefs, *Platinum Rats* LP
3. Moral Panic, Self-titled LP
4. CJ Ramone, *The Holy Spell... LP*
5. Fried Egg, *Square One* LP

**Chris Mason**

1. Marbled Eye, *Leisure* LP
2. Uranium Club, *The Cosmo Cleaners* LP
3. Fatamorgana, *Terra Alta* LP
4. Priors, *New Pleasure* LP
5. Landline, Self-titled LP

**Chris Terry**

- Postage flexi EP
- The World Is A Vampire, "Trenchsewer" b/w "Heartshorn" LP
- Bob Mould Band, live in L.A., March 2019
- Lee "Scratch" Perry, *Roast Fish, Collie Weed, & Cornbread* LP
- Marlon James discussing his new book *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* with Roxane Gay at the Museum of African-American Art in L.A.

**Craven Rock**

1. Release of my book: *Juggalo Country: Inside the World of Insane Clown Posse and America's Weirdest Music Scene* on Microcosm Press
2. #eggboy
3. Billy Bragg at Tractor Tavern
4. Buriën, Snow White And The Baby Eaters, The Disorderlies, C U Next Tuesday at Kraken
5. Hellbent For Horror podcast

**Daryl Gussin**

- Top 5 Favorite Lyrics from Black Dots' Everything Has Gotta Change*
5. "Fight, fight, for what seems right, seemed to happen every night, common sense was a luxury they could never ever comprehend."
  4. "Open up it'll make you weep. It's a cry out loud and a tear on my cheek."
  3. "Remember back as far as you can, did you fall in line or take ■ stand?"
  2. "I'm not afraid of getting old."
  1. "I waited my whole life for the world to do the right thing, traded my passion in for patience, but no more."

**Dayna Castillo**

1. *Stay Free: The Story of The Clash* podcast
2. Viagra Boys, *Street Worms* LP
3. Murderer, *I Did It All for You* LP
4. Surfbort, *Billy* EP
5. Idles, *Joy as an Act of Resistance* LP

**Designated Dale**

1. Thee Sinseers. Genuine soul and R&B is very much alive and well here in Los Angeles. You wish your band was this great.
2. Mickey Leigh, *Mutated Music* EP. Mickey and Co. continue to keep the true spirit of NYC rock'n'roll rocking and rolling.
3. Young John Watson, *Motor Head Baby 7"*. Back in 1953, this groovin' R&B single hit the stands, and the copy I have belonged to my father who was but a slicked-back sixteen-year-old.
4. Downtown Juan, Robert Corales, and others serve up their version of cumbias, and it is goooooood.
5. L7 should have a new full-length record out on Joan Jett's Blackheart Records by the time you're reading this, and the few tracks I've heard so far promise a great time for all (it's L7, for fuck's sake!).

**Eric Baskauskas**

- Oozing Wound, *High Anxiety* LP
- Devil Master, *Satan Spits on Children of Light* LP
- Malokarpatan, live at Roadburn
- Amyl And The Sniffers, live in Brussels
- Sekrete, *Endless Fucking Nightmare* CS

**Jamaica Dyer**

- Sophie Yanow's serializing her webcomic about queer punk biker kids in Paris on thecontradictions.com
- Koak's new series of paintings "Holding Breath" is going to be showing at Union Pacific in London.
- Rachel Fannan's putting out new solo tracks on Spotify (and just joined the psych rock outfit Black Mountain)
- Tara Booth's painted comics are everything; the new book *DUI* from Colorama looks superb.
- Silver Sprocket's storefront in the Haight, I will visit you this month.

**Jimmy Alvarado**

- Mike Villalobos' birthday bash with The Gears, La Tuya, Terpenes, Akrid, and Baron Bandini, 4/20/19 at Café NELA
- Red Brigade, La Tuya, Jesus & The Dinosaurs, 4/26/19 at Café NELA
- Prince Street Pizza, New York
- Dollar Boys podcasts
- It's almost summer!

**Kayla Greet**

1. The Murderburgers in someone's kitchen at The Murder Mine, b/w The Briefs and The Stitches at Clockout Lounge on the same night (Seattle). Back-to-back gigs!
2. Bob Mould Band at Wonderland Ballroom (Portland), and at Neumos (Seattle). Back-to-back gigs!
3. Tsunami Bomb at Tony V's (Everett), and at Jazz Bones (Tacoma). Back-to-back gigs!
4. Criminal Code (RIP), Arctic Flowers, Pleasure Leftists at Jankuland / King's Books (Tacoma)
5. Laura Jane Grace And The Devouring Mothers with Control Top at Doug Fir (Portland)

# Love Keeps Kicking



**Kevin Dunn**

1. La Tuya, Self-titled
2. Electric Eels Shock, *Best of EES*
3. Affected Youth, *Formative Years*
4. Steve Adamyk Band, *Paradise*
5. Bob Mould, *Sunshine Rock*

**Kurt Morris**

1. Strand Of Oaks, *Eraserland*
2. Cursive, *The Ugly Organ*
3. Al Burian, *No Apocalypse* (book)
4. Various Authors, *Lemonade Stand, Volume II* (book)
5. The impending arrival of spring

**Mark Twistworthy**

- Radon, *More of Their Lies* LP
- Digital Leather, *Feet* LP
- Uranium Club, *The Cosmo Cleaners* LP
- The Stroppies, *Whoosh* LP
- Amenra, live

**Martin Wong**

1. Phranc in concert at McCabe's and in conversation at Art Division.
2. Claw Hammer at the Satellite with Watt & The Missingmen and Shark Toys, and then at the Glass House with Mudhoney and Adolescents. And Donut Man with Tony afterward.
3. The Dils reunion ride continuing with Watt & The Missingmen, The Horseheads, and The Last at Alex's.
4. Redd Kross one-off *Born Innocent* lineup show with and for Janet at The Echo.
5. The Linda Lindas getting asked to open for Bikini Kill. My daughter and nieces and their friend are punker than us parents will ever be.

**Mike Fatoon**

1. Character Actor, Self-titled 7"
2. Night Birds, *Roll Credits* LP
3. Keeanga-Ymahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (book)

4. Toys That Kill / Iron Chic, Split LP
5. Kamasi Washington, *Heaven and Earth* 4 x LP (with hidden bonus LP!)

**Mike Fournier**

- Rodan, *The Hat Factory* 93
- Uranium Club, *The Cosmo Cleaners*
- *Minor Leagues* #7
- Ex Hex, *It's Real*
- 7"s: Collate, "Communication" b/w "Selective Memory" (tie)
- Spowder / Glazer split

**Mike Frame**

- Pegboy, live in Laramie, Wyo.
- Ex Hex, *It's Real*
- *Shrill* (television series)
- Autoclave, *Discography*
- *Secret Lives of Introverts* (book)

**Ollie Mikse**

- Best Movies of 2018 (Death to the Superhero Genre!)*
- *Death of Stalin*
  - *Sorry to Bother You*
  - *Thoroughbreds*
  - *Border*
  - *Suspiria*

**Paul Silver**

1. Problem Daughter, *Grow Up Trash* LP
2. Even In Blackouts, *Romantic!* LP
3. Pup, *Morbid Stuff* LP
4. Martha, *Love Keeps Kicking* LP
5. Steve Adamyk Band, *Paradise* LP

**Rebecca Minjarez**

- The Kinks, *Kinks*
- Nina Simone, *Pastel Blues*
- Solitaire chess
- Will Rodgers State Beach
- Window seats at diners and cafés

**Rene Navarro**

- Top Five Comics*
1. *This Modern World*
  2. *Too Much Coffee Man*
  3. *Immortal Choke*
  4. *Won Ton Not Now*
  5. *Bite the Cactus*

**Rev. Norb**

- Bad Sports, *Constant Stimulation* LP
- Marked Men, *On the Other Side* LP
- Cowboys, *Bottom of a Rotten Flower* LP
- Last Sons Of Krypton / Foamers?, Split LP
- Various Artists, *Down South Spaghetti Accident* LP

**Rich Cocksedge**

- Hipshot Killer, *All This Time Is Ours* LP
- Rad Owl, *Madison Beast* LP
- Equilibrio / Furio, Split LP
- Various Artists, *Hangover Heartattack: A Tribute to Poison Idea* CD
- Gary Floyd, *Please Bee Nice: My Life Up 'Til Now* (book)

**Rick V.**

1. DiNK (A comics show) in Denver, Colo.
2. Dialer (from Philly) going on tour.
3. *Wonder Boy Returns* (video game)
4. Three-hour, big budget Hollywood superhero movie.
5. Ska Phase being voted Razorcake's best new podcast.

**DJ Naked Rob****Radio Valencia 87.9FM | SF**

1. The Cowboys, *The Bottom of a Rotten Flower*
2. Fried Egg, *Square One*
3. Jonny Manak And The Depressives, *Anybody Wanna Skate*
4. E.T. Explore Me, *Shine*
5. Req'd, *Fall in Love on Hate Street*

**RoQue Torres**

1. Business Of Dreams, *Ripe for Anarchy* LP
2. Pop Ook, *Comix and Music Anthology* (zine)
3. Louie Pérez, *Good Morning Aztlan: The Words Pictures and Songs of Louie Pérez* (book)
4. Ollin / Dirty Old Town. A Sincere Pogues Tribute pre-St. Patrick's Day live at The

- Redwood Bar, 3/16/19
5. The Reverend Horton Heat, *Whole New Life* LP

**Ryan Nichols**

1. *No Mercy: The Authorized and Uncensored Biography of The Stranglers* by David Buckley (book)
2. *Slouching towards Bethlehem* by Joan Didion (book)
3. Horny Wave Razorcake podcast
4. Shadowhouse, *Conformity* EP
5. Red red wine

**Sean Koepenick****Heavy Rotation**

1. Down By Law, *Redoubt* 10"
2. The Slickee Boys, *No Breaks* CD
3. The Razz, *You Can Run 7"*
4. The Proletariat, *Move* digital
5. The Bezerkers, Self-titled LP

**Toby Tober****Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed**

1. *Shirkers*
2. *Border*
3. *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot*
4. *Letterkenny*
5. *Trigger Warning* with Killer Mike

**Todd Taylor**

- Xetas, live at Antone's
- Martha, *Love Keeps Kicking* LP
- Uranium Club, *The Cosmo Cleaners* LP
- Marlon James in discussion with Roxane Gay at the Museum of African-American Art in L.A. located behind the bedding section of a department store in a mall.
- Toys That Kill / Iron Chic, Split LP

**Ty Stranglehold**

1. *Trash On*, 6 x LP (RIP Peter)
2. Toys That Kill / Iron Chic, Split LP
3. Bob Mould, *Sunshine Rock* LP
4. Eerie Family, Self-titled album
5. Uranium Club, *The Cosmo Cleaners* LP





#### 96 GHOSTS: *Know the Pattern: 7"*

If you're a fan of old school Punk-O-Rama pop punk like Osler or Millencolin, or high energy political stuff in the vein of Anti-Flag's *A New Kind of Army* you'll love this 7". Songs are energetic with that ascending bass style that carried so many sad punks through the early 2000s. I wanna go skating now. —Candace Hansen (Snubbed)

#### ABOLITIONIST: *A New Militance: 10"*

This is essentially Abolitionist's response to that travesty of a 2016 presidential election here in America. I really like the idea of "your feeble grasp of power is coming to an end" as stated in the song "Actually" because it is really past time for these sorry motherfuckers in this present administration to go. They have songs ranging from women rising up and turning the tables, to everyone waking up from their complacency and realizing even when you get to where you want to be, you still have to keep on fighting to hold that gained ground. Otherwise, we'll sink even deeper. —Matt Average (1859 / Different Kitchen)

#### ABOLITIONIST: *A New Militance: 10"*

A concept record of sorts from this Oregon band, detailing a near-future in which a fed up women's movement uses any means necessary to overthrow an unnamed "autocrat" and claim true equality. With musical influence from Propagandhi and an understandable disgust with the current state of American leadership, these guys do an admirable job of showing their support for women, even if some of the lyrics are a bit on the nose and individual songs feel incomplete at times. Unfortunately, my recurring thought while listening to this record is that a man is singing these words, representing women's voices. I certainly don't want to criticize though, as vocally supporting this movement—being allies—is a crucial role, and that's clearly the place that this band is coming from. —Chad Williams (1859, 1859records.bandcamp.com / Different Kitchen)

#### ACTIVE MINDS:

##### *Religion Is Nonsense: 10"*

Active Minds are never a band that minces words or holds back. Here they are offering sonic commentary on the present moment's many ills: religion, social media, bigot politicians, and other undesirables. Style-wise they keep it hard-driving punk with some thrashy elements, and sometimes dip into mid-to-late '80s U.K.-style punk when it veered towards a poppier sound and added some whoa-ohs for today's listener. I prefer their more blistering approach, as heard in "Step One," "You're a Fucking Idiot," and the title track. This record comes housed in a 10" booklet of lyrics and other ruminations, along with a screen printed patch featuring Terry

## RECORD REVIEWS



I know this is a weird compliment, but sometimes it sounds like a Recess Records band making fun of an early Offspring song.

—Chris Terry  
DEPOSIT MAN, Frustrated CD

Graham in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. —Matt Average (Loony Tunes, loonytunesrecords.co.uk)

#### ADJUSTMENT CENTER: *Demo: CS*

Hardcore that plants itself between the Minor Threat-era of Dischord and the '90s punk boom of Epitaph. It would be dismissive to describe their tape as "no frills," but the band definitely doesn't aim for style. The tape feels ultimately like a band stretching its legs, getting the early ideas out. A solid first effort; the band plays well together as a trio and they definitely have a sound that works between them as musicians. If this band sticks together, I could really see them making a good record with this lineup. —Gwen Static (Self-released, adjustmentcenter.bandcamp.com)

#### AGADOR SPARTACUS:

##### *Agastoning: CDEP*

Much as I like the band's name—cribbed from a character in the American remake of *La Cage Aux Folles*—the music itself is fairly nondescript guitar-driven alternative rock. Wanted to like it more, but I couldn't pull them out of a lineup with a buncha other bands of the same type. —Jimmy Alvarado (Agador Spartacus, agageddon.com)

#### ALEX WILEY COYOTE: *II: CS*

The closest I can get to an accurate rendering of this is that the music sounds like Devo gone honky-tonk with some '80s synthpop sensibilities thrown in. This had the potential to be an intriguing and captivating singer-songwriter offering; the opening track, "Maintenance Man," is almost worth the price of admission.

But after that the record becomes somewhat hit-or-miss, with more misses than hits as the songs start to sound more and more like basement noodlings and outtakes. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Self-released)

#### AMERICAN WAR MACHINE:

##### *Unholy War: LP*

The debut album from this Boston-based outfit is really good hardcore, with a clear Motörhead influence noticeable in the drive and delivery of many of the tracks. Members of Slapshot and Agnostic Front are involved, so it comes as no surprise to discover that *Unholy War* kicks ass musically and lyrically. The band hammers home its message with subtlety being in short supply. The production provides a clean yet thunderous sound, perfect for what the band is doing. Beyond the fact that I like this a lot, there's not much to add. —Rich Cocksedge (Bridge 9)

#### ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS:

##### *Psychic Sidekick: LP*

Andy Human And The Reptoids are fire on this LP. Keeping in orbit with Devo, Mick Trouble, Gary Numan, and the Urinals, their sound is at times new-wavey, with just as much expanse for some rippin' guitar shreds with underlying rock'n'roll melodies. But with Gorf space sounds! *Psychic Sidekick* is a series of short blasts that are self-contained, perfect, and weird little space nuggets. After Andy released *Jackson Pollock*, I was pretty sure he was a musical genius, but this album, it tops it. Highly recommended. —Camille Reynolds (Total Punk)

#### ANEURYSM: *Awareness: LP*

Noisy, confident, swaggering, with threads of melodies buried deep in there. The band's got the joyous certainty of David Yow and Jesus Lizard, and like them, Aneurysm veers all over the place and still makes it seem like they're behind the wheel and all is intentional. Recorded by Chris Johnson at GodCity, mastered by Will Killingsworth, and with brain-melting, extensive art by Mark McCoy, *Awareness* sounds and looks amazing. If you like unyielding, punishing kind of noise rock in the vein of, say, Unsane, this is a band you're going to want to check out. —Keith Rosson (Tor Johnson)

#### ANEURYSM: *Awareness: LP*

Ripping fast, noisy hardcore here with a spazzed-out, shrieking singer who's trying to work through a lot of pain. The whole album is a non-stop onslaught of mental anguish with dark lyrics that will ruin your day if you're having a good one, but just might be what you need for a bad one. At times it references some of the least accessible Nirvana songs, but it's far from grunge. It's ugly hardcore for ugly people, and if you've been in an ugly mood like I have, then I highly recommend locking yourself away and playing *Awareness*. —Craven Rock (Tor Johnson)

#### ANGRY COUGARS:

##### *Stay in Your Lane: 7"*

The newest single from this now long-running Columbus band shows that the aggressive vibe and overall Dwarves feel is still in place more than half a decade later. It's interesting to someone who is a power pop fan to see Pat Dull in such a project after so many years of releasing very tuneful three-minute pop song type stuff. The vocals are strong and the recording is solid. Fans of the more aggressive side of garage punk would probably really love this band. Matt Reber of New Bomb Turks also appears to now be a member, so that may be of interest. —Mike Frame (H-Bomb)

#### ANGRY COUGARS:

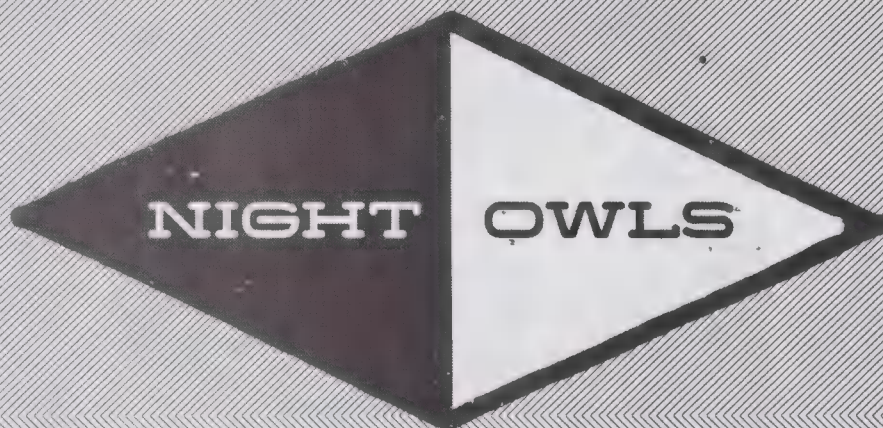
##### *Stay in Your Lane: 7"*

Loud, fast, and pissed—just the way hardcore should be. A little 1980s in the riffage, a little Lemmy meets Naked Aggression in the vocals. Do y'all remember On The Rag Records? This band would have totally fit on that roster! Great '90s-style punk hot rod art on the cover. Wish this would have come with a lyric insert though. —Candace Hansen (H-Bomb)

#### ANTIBODIES: *Antibodies LP 2018: CS*

Fast hardcore riffs, underwater rapid-fire vocals, and distorted, driving bass, Antibodies keeps things short, succinct, and fucking satisfying. Similar to Booji Boys, but def on the hardcore side of life. Two thumbs up. —Camille Reynolds (antibodieschtn.bandcamp.com)





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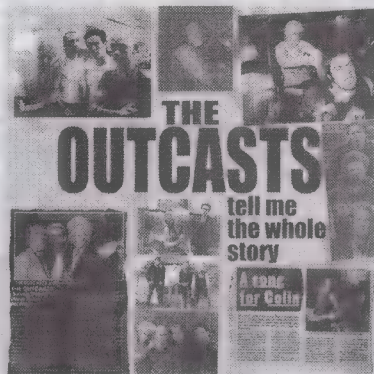
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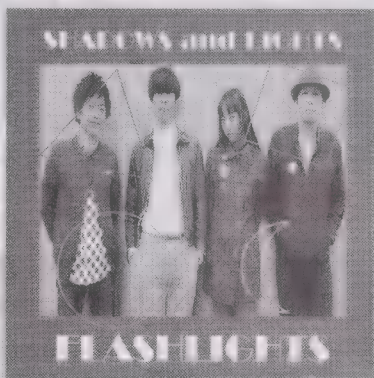
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### ANTICITIZEN: *Invasive Species// Endangered World: 7"*

Okay, this is the coolest-looking 7" I've ever held in my little freak hands. It literally looks like glass. Apparently, this was cut in real time using a 1940s Presto 75A recording lathe, meaning it's hand carved from polycarbonate and not done on a factory press. When I played it, first it sounded like shit but I guess it is typical of records like this and you have to fully put it on the groove. I only learned this after listening to the record a few times in bewilderment—thinking I suddenly forgot how to use a record player—and a little info sheet fell out of the package. Upon the first few listens there was literally so much static creating distance that it made me feel like I was listening on the other side of a brick wall, 40 in hand because I didn't want to cough up the three dollars to get into the crust gig. It's hard to get it to play consistently and clearly on my shitty punk record player but from what I can hear it rules, like a thrasher Minor Threat raised on crust. The nerd in me loves this special release. The practical reviewer is having a hard time with it. Either way, it's conceptual and punk and nerdy and I'm into it. —Candace Hansen (Self-released)

### ANTICITIZEN: *Stand Up and Fight: 7" EP*

Simple, straightforward hardcore with ■ anarcho punk bent. Lyrics address

some tried-and-true subjects—religion, oppression, political bullshit, and class warfare. Kinda nondescript based on this, but that could easily be just what sounds like ■ four-track production. "I'm sick of all the injustice / I'm sick of all this prejudice / I'm sick of these pigs out on the street / Always there to profile me..." I'm sure ■ few of us can relate. —Jimmy Alvarado (Self-released)

### ARE THEY YES THEY ARE:

#### Self-titled: LP

I would have never guessed this record would sound as cool as it does. Their monogram and cover had me thinking I was about to head into hardcore town. Wrong. The music is quirky and fun like Killer Pussy and the B-52's, with vocals that remind me of Ian Svenonius. I imagine these guys are a blast to see live. Go dance this mess around. —Ryan Nichols (Self-released, no address listed)

#### ARTERIES: Self-titled: LP

Potent mix of post-punk and arty noise rock from some folks outta Portland. The guitars and synth are well balanced throughout and the rhythm section keeps the largely mid-tempo beats in the sweet spot between dancey and almost tribal. Throughout, the band keeps their sound stripped to its essential parts, refraining from dropping in a ton of superfluous bullshit—simple, minimal, and packing punch. Nice work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Nadine)

### BEACH BLANK: *MPLS: 7"*

New single that sports a cover that has Hüsker Dü and The Replacements in stars on the front. But it is ■ bait and switch on the back since the song choices are solo selections from these bands' front men. I do like Westerberg and Mould solo material so it is not a major hang-up to enjoying this one. But one more thing that rubbed me the wrong way. There are bands and there are solo artists. If you declare that you are ■ band then you shouldn't list all the members except the front man as "additional." Maybe try the James Alex Experience next time around. —Sean Koepenick (Bridge Nine, b9store.com)

### BLACK CAMARO:

#### *Protocol of Dreams: LP*

Black Camaro is more modern pop/rock'n'roll than punk, however that doesn't necessarily mean punks wouldn't like it. *Protocol of Dreams* is heavily infused with Beatles pop, Oasis, electro that is incredibly palatable, and what I would believe modern indie rockers listen to today. With weaving vocals, slick production, and thoughtful songs, this was an easy listen. —Camylle Reynolds (Running In Place)

### BLACK DOTS:

#### *Everything Has Gotta Change: LP*

Technology has become accessible enough that everything can sound and look good these days. You can take a

picture with your fucking phone for the cover of an LP. We're constantly surrounded by total morons releasing records that people absolutely love; at least for a quick moment. That's why when a record comes along with songs and lyrics that really resonate, it just feels different. It's exhilarating! It feels like it used to feel! And I love it, and it reminds me how important these goddamn things really are. Colorado's Black Dots are comprised of people you might recognize from The Achievement and Vena Cava. They play that introspective, heart-felt style that cities like San Diego and Tampa blew the doors off of in the 2000s, faintly blended with the musicality of post-hardcore DC. But this isn't nostalgia. This is so current and vital, and that's what makes it so beautiful, and inspiring, and painful. On a two hour bus ride to my uncle's house for a family gathering, headphones on, I listened to this album on repeat. Five months later there are parts that still give me goose bumps. When you question your existence, you might not get the answers you want, but at least you get answers. —Daryl (Snappy Little Numbers / La Escalera)

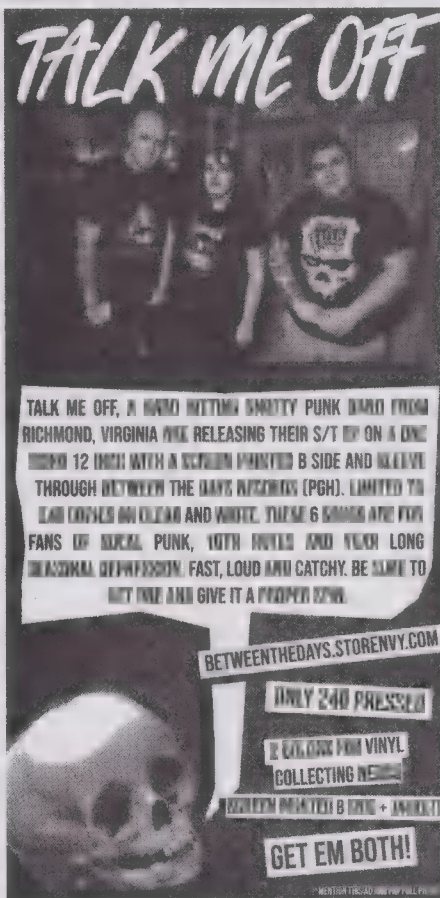
### BLANKZ:

#### *"Getting Over You" b/w "Barfly: 7"*

Back in the early '90s, punk was awash with bands wearing converse, skinny jeans, sunglasses, and sounding like a wimpy, broke-ass Ramones. At the

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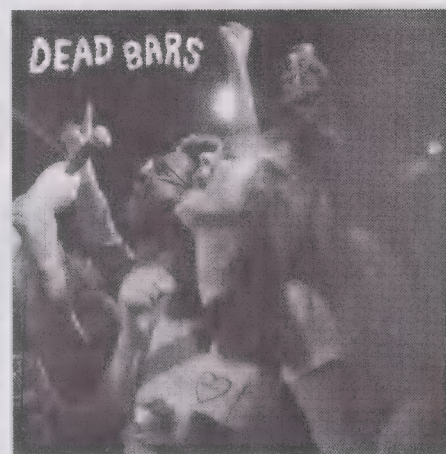
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time, we were busy being punk as fuck and I thought all those bands like The Queers et al. were weak as fuck. Who knew in 2019 Phoenix, Ariz. there are still folks dressed like Ramones playing pop punk. Sounds weak as fuck to me still. —Tim Brooks (Slope)

#### BLOODSHOT BILL:

##### *Come Get Your Love Right Now: LP*

I've listened to all of Tyler Mahan Coe's country music history podcast and read a book on the Hag, but at best that gives me ■ passing knowledge of the tangential genre that is Bloodshot Bill. So I don't want to speak out of school when I review this and I'll do my best to keep my foot out of my mouth. To me, this is a super Cramps-y version of psychobilly and dark Americana. It's sung by guys who chain smoke, but have frogs in their throat who also chain smoke. Just a lot of deep, guttural wailing on these tunes. Everything has that grassroots rock'n'roll rumble to it, while choruses are howled before jumping back down to the gravelly squeal, much like Steve Wahrer (The Trashmen) and Lux Interior. If you're into stuff like that, this is gonna kick your ass. Personally it's not my bag, but I'm glad to have heard it. —Kayla Greet (Goner)

#### BLUE NUN: Self-titled: CS

More of that embroidered pizza patch-wearing style of trendy rock'n'roll that's always way too polished and

lacking in élan. I think they're going for power pop but with too much pop and not enough power. I'm actually reminded of Poison when I listen to this. That should never happen. —Craven Rock (readysteady81@gmail.com, bluenunsf.bandcamp)

#### BOB MOULD: *Sunshine Rock: LP*

The power of Bob compels me! If there has been one thing in the last thirty years that I can count on, it's that Bob Mould is eventually going to write another batch of exquisitely crafted songs. I jumped on the Hüsker Dü train right at the last stop, but ■ few years later Sugar came along and kicked me into submission with more hooks than a Nova Scotian tackle box. Many great solo records followed the demise of that band, but the best ones have been since he picked up his current backing band of Jason Narducy and Jon Wurster back in 2012. *Sunshine Rock* is a fine addition to Mould's discography. The press has really been leaning into the fact that this is Bob's "positivity" trip and the songs are happy. The truth is, I never notice when he's being negative or dark because his music always puts a smile on my face and ■ welcome worm in my ear. This album is no different. —Ty Stranglehold (Merge, mergerecords.com)

#### BOOZE AND GLORY: *Chapter IV: LP*

One hundred percent pub rock here, folks. There's a strong dose of

Flogging Molly, Rancid, and oi in these songs, but they also carry their own weight. It's not all pints and fists; the songs are super melodic, making their chanting anthemic delivery more dynamic. —Ryan Nichols (Pirates Press, webstore@piratespress.com)

#### BRICHEROS:

##### *Making Our Way to the USA: LP*

Hot and ready Ramones-core that leans into the band's Peruvian roots. Will it blow your mind? No. Will it deliver some competent Lookout! Records style pop punk that, at its best, sounds like ■ lost Lillingtons record? Absolutely. Bricheros know what they're good at and deliver with confidence in a genre that seems smaller every day. It's familiar, it's comfortable, it's "for fans of the genre," and I say that as the biggest fan of the genre possible. —Gwen Static (Self-released, bricheros.bandcamp.com)

#### BROWER: *Buzzsaws: LP*

*Buzzsaws* is the first full-length album by Brower, a group whose glam and power pop sensibilities fuse a sound both retro and inventive. Involuntary foot movement is inevitable. The album begins with "Real Girl," a catchy number with a slow guitar upswing and drowsily rising chorus spinning playfully into the atmosphere of Big Star. A few songs later, "69th Rd." picks up the pace with some glam-studded

boogie. "Hacksaw" starts a simple, mid-tempo bass riff combined with whisper-talk vocals. The song keeps the pace of ■ T. Rex bopper eventually devolving into a lake of droning keyboard and watery guitar. "You May Know Me as the Kind of Guy Who..." is another late night, power popper to swing to. The album continues back and forth between bring-on-the-night glam and final-approach-for-a-late-night-landing power pop. It appeals to fans of both without pandering. Tasteful tambourine is interjected throughout. It's a stand out for you and your uncool niece. —Billups Allen (Dig)

#### BWAK DWAGON:

##### *Underground and Passed Around: LP*

Moody rock with howly, moody vocals. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bwak Dwagon, facebook.com/bwakdwagon)

#### CAPTAIN ASSHOLE:

##### *Wini an Awful Life: LP*

German pop punk that sounds more American in almost every way than it does German. That's not ■ pejorative statement, just a fact. I like this a lot, as it has boundless energy and a bounce that is infectious—one of those records that gets your head nodding even though you don't know you're doing it. The U.S.A. connection is strengthened by members of Cold Wrecks and Arliss Nancy chipping in with the odd vocal here and there. I'd imagine

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this is the kind of band which would go down extremely well at The Fest with its punchy delivery and cheery attitude. Captain Asshole certainly does it for me. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-released)

**CASUAL NAUSEA: Demons: LP**

A new name to me and this quintet manages to offer up a few surprises across the twenty tracks on *Demons*. The album is predominantly spiky, angry tirades set against a backdrop of buzzing guitar and a battery of drums. However, the surprises come in the form of some slower, more danceable numbers that change the pace of the album without losing any of its momentum. One of the other things I noticed was in "Fuck Up," where the backing vocal underpins a lot of the song, sounds remarkably like "Amoeba" by Adolescents. I imagine that this bunch would be good fun live, especially after having a few pints to loosen up my aged dancing legs. —Rich Cocksedge (TNS)

**CATCH AS CATCH CAN:**

**Regular Vanilla: LP**

Germans mixing indie punk with a little bit o' soul, including the odd horn section here and there. Not bad, not life changing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alien Snatch)

**CAVEMEN, THE: Lowlife: 7" EP**

Blown-out garage rock outta New Zealand that stomps and swaggers

with the best of 'em. Three tunes of bluesy slime and attitude that'll leave you hoping for a tetanus shot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

**CHACHI ON ACID / BUTCH HALLER & HIS CHESTERFIELD RAMBLERS:**

**Everyone's a Urinal: 7"**

I don't know how seriously to take anything on this record, but I think it's wonderful. Chachi On Acid, longtime Canadian punkers, do a live rendition of "Everyone's a Urinal" on *The Butch Haller Show*. Then Butch Haller, a ninety-seven-year-old country/rockabilly veteran, also does a version of "Everyone's a Urinal," making it something you could maybe square dance to. Is there really a Butch Haller? Who can say? This a beautiful, unnecessary record. —Matt Werts (Agoraphobic Record Syndicate, chachionacid.bandcamp.com)

**CHATHAM FORTS, THE:**

**"Not Fade Away" b/w**

**"I Wanna Be Your Man": 7"**

This single is part of a Damaged Goods cover series where bands cover one of their favorite singles. The Chatham Forts have chosen "Not Fade Away/I Wanna Be Your Man" by The Rolling Stones. This single is exactly what you're expecting. "Not Fade Away" and "I Wanna Be Your Man" are given the scrappy Billy Childish treatment with his blasé,

snotty vocals and dry distortion. I never get enough. You'll love it too unless you hate The Stones and/or Childish. And you should probably know that by now. —Billups Allen (Damaged Goods)

**CHRONIC SUBMISSION:**

**Empty Heads, Poison Darts: LP**

Vinyl release of this Toronto hardcore band's 1984 demo, originally on cassette. Tunes are a veritable point-by-point example of the era's, and the genre's, best traits—powerful, thrashy without being silly about it, punchy, and firing on all cylinders. Thirty-five years later and it still gets the blood pulsing quite effectively. Highly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Schizophrenic)

**CLOUD RAT / THE WORLD IS A**

**VAMPIRE: Blightseed: Split: LP**

The trouble with attempting to objectively evaluate a piece of art that is inherently subjective, is that sometimes you just can't wrap your individual brain around a style or genre enough to appreciate its value, or even begin to describe its attributes in a meaningful way. Such is the case with this split LP. Cloud Rat and The World Is A Vampire both play dark, gothy, noisy hardcore (grindcore?) that this listener has a difficult time appreciating. With members of respected bands like Thou and Bitchface, I'm sure that it's my deficiency, not theirs. Regardless, this

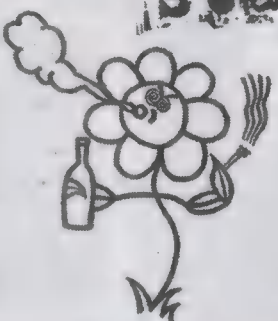
isn't for me. But it could very well be for you, if this reductive description sounds at all intriguing. Also, the cover art is quite stunning and conveys the feeling of this record much more accurately than these words. —Chad Williams (IFB, ifbrecords.com / Feast Of Tentacles, festoftentacles.com)

**COLD WRECKS:**

**This Could Be Okay: LP**

I'm a big fan of the developing sad party punk genre, but the percentage of melancholy to jubilation frequently favors crying by a huge margin. That ends with Cold Wrecks' sophomore record *This Could Be Okay*. It's still introspective, but in a way that's a lot more fun. It's a sad that's somehow upbeat, almost as if the band has been so disillusioned for so long they decided to not only build a house there but invite everyone over for a blowout bash. In "Crossing Sign" I hear a *Dookie*-era Green Day playfulness to the bass daring me not to have a good time. Listening to "The Season" while driving, I was afraid I'd get a speeding ticket because the change in the drums and the momentum of the hi hats, urged me to go faster. I've never heard before—and I don't think I'll ever hear again—anyone more seemingly delighted to "die in a hospital on Long Island" or who "can't stop screaming, NO!" It's impressive how not whiny it is because with lyrics like this, it really should be. Just reading the

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lyrics I'd think this was an emo band, but no emo record has the boisterous abandon of a crowdsurfer. I suspect they chose the only two songs with any slow or down tempo for the first and last song to remind the listener that they are in fact cheerless despite the irreverently cheerful album. You might forget otherwise. —Lorien Lamarr (Self-released, coldwrecks.bandcamp.com)

## COWBOYS, THE:

### Bottom of ■ Rotten Flower: LP

I've always encountered mild-to-moderate cognitive dissonance trying to square the high praise this band oft-times receives with their weirdly tentative live performance... on balance, I think they do good work, but I have yet seen fit to gush. This album, the Indiana band's fourth, continues this pattern of activity with a cover sticker trumpeting the venerable Eddie Flowers' claim that this record is ■ "kinda modern Midwestern version of *The Who Sell Out* or *Something Else* by the Kinks," which has me thinking 1) this century has *reeeally* got problems if a record with songs about lighting turds on fire is our *The Who Sell Out*, 2) If "My Ohio River Valley View" is supposed to be the new "Waterloo Sunset," we're all fucked, but 3) I can kind of see his point, and what the hell was *The Who Sell Out* anyway? They sing a dopey ballad about getting a tattoo and rock critics read fifty-eight levels of metaphor

into it and call it deep genius, ya know? Many not-quite-expected twists and turns are packed into these sixteen songs, half of which clock in well under the rock'n'roll Mendoza Line of two minutes long. A song with piano and sax and keyboards can be followed by a song about getting a pie in the face and it all kinda works—somewhat like Guided By Voices, whatever they're trying to do rarely lingers long enough to fully wear out its welcome. Next time write more songs about flowers! BEST SONG: "Take My Flower and Run," possibly "Pie in My Eye." "Red-headed Girlfriend" is also swell. BEST SONG TITLE: "Take My Flower and Run" running unopposed. FANTASTICAMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Messages etched in the dead wax reference butt-wiping. —Rev. Nørð (Feel It)

### CRACK CLOUD: Self-titled: LP

Here is the recipe for Crack Cloud: one part The Fall, one part Wire, one part dada. I read a few articles on these guys that mentioned how this band started as a way for them to cope with addiction, recovery, and mental health. I can't think of a better way to get through hard times than creating and listening to music. I love angular, spastic, arty post-punk and this is the perfect amount of weird and fun to make you wanna gyrate like Ian Curtis. —Ryan Nichols (Deranged, derangedyouth@hotmail.com)

## CRAMMM: Live 2018: ■

This was a really enjoyable listen. I can't find much about the band, but the photo on the inside cover of the tape shows guitars and drums. There isn't a song list on the tape either. I don't know if they are tuned strangely or if it's some sort of unorthodox set, but the drums have an appealing compressed quality. The percussion is mechanically fun and frames overdriven, minor chord guitar runs and a bored vocal attack. I love a good late-night cassette experience. That's where this falls with me. I hate to make my old-man, likely-out-of-touch comparisons, but with little info reference, but I'm going to say the set, evidently recorded live in New York City somewhere, is inventive and a low-fi treat if you like things like slower Joy Division songs and/or less structured V.U. I'd listen to it again. —Billups Allen (Brainplan, brainplanrecords.com)

### CRONANDER: Trapped: CD

A while back I reviewed a demo tape by these guys and was taken by their hardcore stylings. Well here we are a few years later and they've continued to up their game. I have a litmus test for hardcore. If you have more metal in your sound than Poison Idea, I am not going to like your band. Cronander definitely falls within the PI scale when it comes to serving up those tasty Pig Champion-esque riffs and squeals. I heartily approve. The vocals

are clear and intelligible. Cronander are pissed at the state of the world and they aren't afraid to tell you. Money obsession, tech dependency, cops, and that orange chimp running (ruining) things down there are prime targets. Remember those annoying people who said, "Well, at least punk rock is going to get better" as ■ response to the idiot getting elected? I guess this is what they meant, but I get the feeling that there would be plenty of other shit for Cronander to be angry about regardless. The recording on this is top notch. I'll reiterate what I said in the closing of my last review: "these guys could become one of my favorite hardcore bands." One step closer, for sure. I will be actively searching out their music from here on out. —Ty Stranglehold (Cronander, cronander.bandcamp.com)

### DEAD BARS: Regulars: CD

For a long while I've been saying Dead Bars are one of my favorite local Seattle bands. It's time to drop that qualifier. They're one of my favorite bands, period. Have I been hearing some of these songs live over the past year or so? Yes, but I have never heard them like this. The guitars are huge—a personality all their own. I suspect the vocals were slightly pushed back to bring up these arena rock riffs and fuzz effects. Fret not though; John Maiello comes through snotty and clear, albeit a little quieter in the

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mix. His trademarked raspy sing shouts are still carrying us through Ramones level lyrical simplicity. "Producto Toxico" starts off with a sweet, slow tempo guitar riff and an egg shaker for several measures until Maiello swoops in with a story about drinking Pacifico in Mexico. It's way Tom Petty, but also way rock'n'roll. Then "Rain" comes charging in with these harmonies and Thin Lizzy leads and it just gets to me. How can a song about walking home in the rain make me want to dance and cry at the same time? I love Dead Bars. It's almost not even fair to us that they are this good of a band. Do we deserve *Regulars*? I'm willing to find out. -Kayla Greet (A-F)

#### DEATH CAT:

##### **Dodo Bird Dirt Eyeball: CD**

Avant garde jazz-influenced rock? Does that even exist? In Death Cat's world—yes. There are songs about cats, as expected. There are songs on other topics that I really can't begin to understand. The music is strange and off-kilter and meanders into realms of unbelievable noisescapes. I still want to show that I was raised with some sense of civility and decorum. I really enjoyed "NO04," which is an instrumental. -Sean Koepenick (Self-released, deathcat.us)

#### DEPOSIT MAN: *Frustrate*: CD

Finnish punk band featuring "four punk dads in their 30s," who know

their way around a hook and play with an appealing sloppy, spazzy energy. I know this is a weird compliment, but sometimes it sounds like a Recess Records band making fun of an early Offspring song. Don't ever grow up, guys. Just please tell me that the Pearl Jam crooning on the title track is a joke. -Chris Terry (Self-released, depositmanpunk.bandcamp.com)

#### DES DEMONIAS:

##### **"Bay of Pigs" b/w "Skrews": 7"**

A heavy, reverberated organ riff opens this record up, which caused me to get a little excited and a little scared simultaneously. Like am I in for something channeling Tim Armstrong's *A Poets Life*? or some old school ska-inspired jam? Or is this gonna get all hipster ELO on me? Whatever; I'm here for the ride. This single doesn't disappoint. The first track "Bay of Pigs" is like a Northern Soul-esque Sabbath banger: big rolls, chunky riffs, and even a tambourine break fill the space creatively. I'm actually really glad I waited to review this 7" until spring time; it sets a vibe. Imagine old school Sub Pop took on a punky soul band, routed through a touch of Posh Boy underground brightness. It's incense and an open window with sunshine. Unique and rad and thankfully not another basic rock'n'roll record. -Candace Hansen (Slovenly)

#### DIGITAL LEATHER: *Feet*: LP

Okay, so there's a lot to talk about here. First off, this is a collection of primarily tape-only released songs recorded between 2008-2018, collected here for the first time... and they're great lo-fi synthesizer jams with tons of hooks! For real, the songs on here are the upper echelon of great, bouncy synthpop and more distant-sounding coldwave tunes. Sometimes punky or garagey, other times not, but nearly always with the synths being the main attraction. Other Digital Leather that I've heard didn't necessarily stick with me but these songs are different, as they seem catchier than I remember. This entire release is super solid, and this doesn't seem like a collection of newer and older tunes. Instead, it feels like a super cohesive release, and I'm super into it. Secondly, the packing on this record is fucking insane. Hand numbered LP covers with beveled corners and a hinge glued onto the cover as part of the artwork, including a sixteen page booklet and other goodies. The entire package is well thought out, front and back. Overall, I can't recommend this enough. -Mark Twistworthy (Stencil Trash, info@stenciltrash.de, stenciltrash.de)

#### DINOSAUR LOVE:

##### **Dinosaurs Have: EP**

Twee, lo-fi indie pop songs about romantic dinosaurs by Peter Kulikowski, who apparently has a

dino-song cottage industry going. The songs are dreamy and catchy and remind me of early Beck. If you can deal with this much cuteness, then you're gonna want to put one of these songs on a mix for your special someone. -Chris Terry (Related)

#### DIRTY JUNK: *On Yr Knees*: CS

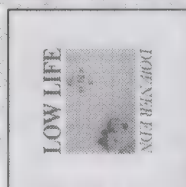
The Minneapolis-based duo Dirty Junk play a discordant blend of noise and garage rock. There are quiet, brooding moments, as in the closing riffs of the first song "Ten Thousand," which offer brief interludes between the chaos. I was a bit disappointed in how similar every song sounded, and how much was lost behind the wall of fuzzy noise. While this wasn't really for me, it may still be worth checking out. One person's Dirty Junk might be another person's treasure, right? -Paul J. Comeau (Don't Panic, itsadistro@gmail.com)

#### DIRTY WOMBS:

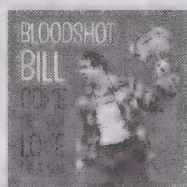
##### **Accused to Overcome: LP**

This is crusty Greek punk that ties together the motor-charged punk thing with some super melodic guitar lines that are sometimes reminiscent of stadium crust. This stuff is raw and unbridled, so don't expect this to sound like Wolfbrigade. It's an absolute ripper from front to back: killer guitar solos, breaks in the right places, and driving drums. English translations of the lyrics provided. This is great for genre enthusiasts, but

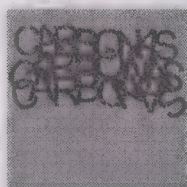
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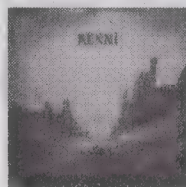
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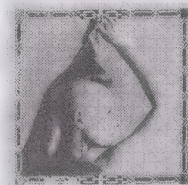
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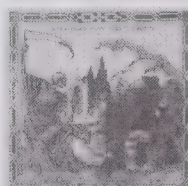
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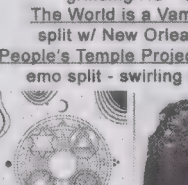
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**The World is a Vampire - LP** - New Orleans noisy goth punk - mem. of THOU

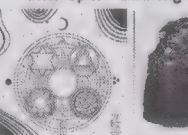


**The World is a Vampire/Cloud Rat** - MI's best grinding HC - dark and emotional

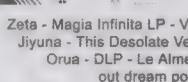


**The World is a Vampire/Torture Garden 7"** split w/ New Orleans thrash/crust anger.

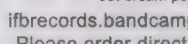
**People's Temple Project/Sleeper Wave** - Amazing emo split - swirling heavy vs. mathy heavy.



**Zeta - Magia Infinita LP** - Venezuelan emo/chaos post rock



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this stuff is good enough to be worth sitting down with even if this style isn't really your thing. —Ian Wise (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

**DOUBLE FISTED: Six Sick Six Pack Songs of Slimy Southern Fried Sorry Assed Sickness: CS**

Double Fisted is a new project of Bill and Roger from Grissle. Some might remember Grissle for their split with Total Fury back in the '90s. With Double Fisted, the ex-Grissle duo blasts out quick shots of thrashy punk'n'roll, as in the opening track "Stabb." My favorite track was "3AM," with its heavy intro and more menacing metal vibe. The cover features a trio of luchadores in combat with a buck-toothed guy possessed by a demon. If that was the basis of a graphic novel, I'd read it! —Paul J. Comeau (Double Fisted, doublefisted.bandcamp.com)

**DUMPIES, THE: Self-titled: CS**

Sometimes they sound like a poor man's version of the first two Hüsker Dü albums (a neat trick, given that those two records don't sound particularly similar); other times they just sound like the music that people have to talk over when they're buying the headliner's T-shirts at a pop punk show. There might be a bit of an Ergs! thing going on here, but the so-so fidelity of this tape makes that difficult to confirm. I wouldn't mind hearing more of

this band, but I do not think I care to listen to more of this particular cassette. **BEST SONG:** "Get Up Get Out." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Zaragoza Pool." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This cassette housing is a nice shade of green. —Rev. Nørb (Hovercraft)

**DUMPIES, THE: Zola Budd: CS**

The Dumpies are a Portland, Ore./Austin, Texas-based band who appear to have named all their albums after athletes. Zola Budd is a distance runner. If there is a running theme though, it ends there. They call themselves "scuzzy lo-pop," but I would describe this record as whimsically slapdash. Half the time I thought "this sounds like The Stooges but dirtier" the other half I thought "it's a really messy Descendents." It's approachably sloppy and charmingly jaunty. —Lorien Lamarr (Hovercraft, hovercraftpdx.com)

**E.D.S.: Probation: CS**

With *Probation*, Philadelphia's E.D.S. (Excited Delirium Syndrome), unleash their second sonic attack on the punk scene. A follow-up to 2017's demo, E.D.S. delivers four more tracks of pissed-off, fast hardcore punk. Everything I'd want from a band in this genre is here: tightly written and performed songs, political and borderline-nihilistic lyrics, and a recording with just the right amount of grit. With only

four songs on this EP, the only thing I'm left wanting is more. —Paul J. Comeau (E.D.S., excited.delirium.syndrome@gmail.com)

**E.T.: Cyber Bully: CS**

E.T. aka E./mail T:/rouble (a nod to the staple John Waters film, *Female Trouble*) are queer/trans punks from Minneapolis with a minimalist yet refreshing take on synth/dance punk. I can hear everything from Peaches-gone-anarcho to Berlin/Glass Candy rhythms and even traces of high energy/disco music. The internet/digital age is the prevalent theme lyrically but is obviously served with a grain of salt: this is electronic music after all. If you're of the age to remember when you could only access the internet with a land-line telephone then this album will surely remind you of just how fast technology has advanced and simultaneously terrify you at the thought of what's to come. Did you forget, after all, that you have a tiny computer in your pocket at this very moment tracking your every move? Good stuff. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released, e-t-music.bandcamp.com)

**FEVER DREAM HORROR SCENE:**

**Self-titled: CS**

Fever Dream Horror Scene claim to play deathrock and, don't get me wrong, it's in their aesthetic and sound. Hell, the first track sounds like The Cure played on the wrong speed

(which isn't a bad thing—well, I guess it was on first spin—but I'm totally into it now). However, they seem to reference Midwestern post-hardcore like Slint and Crain, making for an interesting crossover. It's heavy, dark, and at times atmospheric but not in an ambient way; it just creates a dark mood that latches onto you and won't let you go. Seriously, it just envelopes you. It might not at first. At first you might say, "What the fuck is this? The Cure on the wrong speed?" But just wait until it gets its spooky little hooks in ya. —Craven Rock (No address listed)

**FLYTRAPS, THE:**

**Kitten with a Whip: 7"**

Aggressive garage punk with the emphasis on punk is the vibe on this two-song single from a band featuring a Death Valley Girls member. It sounds a bit like the Loudmouths, but not nearly as strong from a songwriting standpoint. The flip is a run through the classic "Nice Boys" by Rose Tattoo, a song that is impossible to mess up and this is a good solid version. —Mike Frame (Outro, outrorecords.com)

**FOOTBALL / WHITE SAVAGE:**

**Split: LP**

Football might be the least "marketable" band name ever. I mean, don't even attempt to google that shit. Punk! Apart from both being from Chicago, both bands share two



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common members, Jered from The Ponys and Jim Hollywood, who has been in The Tyrades, Baseball Furies, and a million other great garage punk bands over the years. Football sound like a "typical" Jim Hollywood band, that is, raucous garage punk with no shortage of catchy parts to grab your attention. White Savage is weirder with more psychedelic elements and less typically garagey but not entirely too different. With the pairing of these two Chicago fuzzed-out bands, this is ■ split LP that makes sense. Good stuff. —Mark Twistworthy (Big Neck, bigneckrecords.com)

#### FREAK: *Ritual Death Demo: 7"*

Vinyl pressing of this short-lived L.A. band's 2015 demo. I was not aware of them during their brief existence, but I caught up quickly when this slab crossed my path. Five tracks of murky, dungeon punk that crashes and plods through two sides of wax emanating an unsettling urge to just set out and destroy. Like if Doc Dart toned it down just a bit and spent one fucked up night in Western Mass with the Deep Wound boys before they learned how to play their instruments. File under: "cult shit." And how do I join? —Daryl (Vague Absolutes)

#### FRIED EGG: *Square One: LP*

I love me some Black Flag. As ubiquitous as the bars are—tattoos, patches, shirts, stickers, et cetera—it often feels like the actual music created

by the band remains in its own world, relatively untouched by subsequent generations. Countless bands claim their influence but precious few take the sounds and energy to heart. Fried Egg actually do, and they also didn't forget that Black Flag made records after 1981. Riffs, leads, rhythms, and energy explode from this Virginia band. Along with other old school hardcore punk influences, they created an old-but-new record, complete with musical left turns and lyrics reflecting frustrations of trying to stay sane while living life in a fucked up world. Annihilate! —Chad Williams (Feel It, feelitrecords.bandcamp.com)

#### GARY ROBERT AND COMMUNITY: *Isolation: LP*

This post-punk band from Missouri is at its best when the songs are miserable and hopeless sounding, coming across like a really dour-sounding mix of Iggy Pop and Lou Reed doing Joy Division covers. The more upbeat songs take on a different feel with less discernable vocals that still have ■ slight Iggy influence; no less enjoyable, just different. Those comparisons aside, there's definitely a '70s vibe going on here in a "guitar rock record" kind of way, while carefully knowing exactly when to say when with the rock bravado. This was a pleasant surprise all around. Recommended! —Mark Twistworthy (Yet You, garyrobertandcommunity.com)

#### GENTLEMENS, THE: *Triage: CD*

Sweet, minty Jesus, this is a veritable monster of a release. Starting with a base of American rock/soul, these Italian thugs with guitars just slam-bang their way through eleven tracks that strut, slink, stomp, and wail. A full-on blowout from go, the band fires on all cylinders throughout, with ■ madman from the Yow School of Howl fronting a band smart enough to slip a little funkiness underneath to make their assault danceable. This has definitely earned a revered spot on this summer's soundtrack. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hound Gawd, houndgawd.com)

#### GHETTO BLASTERS, THE:

##### "Hot Rocks" b/w "Too Loose": 7" EP

I was not that stoked on the first song on this EP, which was just too rote for me. But the second one has much more groove and has got ■ slow-burn intro that works more to temper The Darkness/Jet vibe and send it more of an experimental punk direction. —Theresa W. (Spazz)

#### GLASS BODY: *Self-titled: CS*

For a record with a song titled "Ritalin," I expected a bit more speed. Instead, I have been treated to some of the most narcotizing psychedelic indie art rock. The lyrics drone on top of fuzzy, meandering distortion and the effect is soporific, but less like ■ lullaby and more like I've been sedated. Switching from

major to minor keys frequently has ■ dissociative effect. This record feels like an out of body experience where I have sleep paralysis... in the early 1970s. If you liked The Velvet Underground but thought they were far too danceable or you want to take yourself to an experimental level of chill, this record out of Miami, Fla. is for you. —Lorien Lamarr (Crass Lips, crasslipsrecords.org)

#### GLOBSTERS: *Express Everything: LP*

Globsters is an insane one man band from the middle of Kentucky, the state that was the home of personal favorites The Connie Dungs and A Radio With Guts. A fantastic blend of hardcore and Secret Center-styled sloppy pop, it's a whirlwind, beautiful mess of a record. Color me an instant fan. Lyrics are definitively punk, riffing on the perils of mundane, banal existence. The recording is gleefully lo-fi, capturing the magic perfectly. *Express Everything* is an absolute must. —Art Ettinger (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

#### GREG ANTISTA AND THE LONELY STREETS:

##### *Shake Stomp and Stumble: CD*

Mid-tempo punk that sprinkles in a dash of rockabilly for good measure. I'm hearing some vocal harmonies that actually remind me of The Crunch in parts. There is ■ Steve Soto cover included, which is a nice touch. Band members did time in

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Adolescents, D.I., and Agent Orange. I'm not implying this sounds like those bands, but based on that pedigree you owe it to yourself to check this out. —Sean Koeppenick (Self-released, [guganistaandthelonelystreets.com](http://guganistaandthelonelystreets.com))

#### GULAG BEACH:

##### Potato Mash Bash: LP

What immediately struck me about this album was the cover featuring three people. One was wielding a baseball bat, another was holding a flag, whilst the third had a giant potato masher in hand. Not something I've come across before and obviously a nod to the title of the record, whatever that means. This is good, snotty punk rock from Berlin which has a boisterous and melodic street punk vibe, resulting in quite a rollicking album. Given how bands like Amoebas and Sharp Objects came to mind whilst listening to this, Gulag Beach would sit well within the Modern Action Records roster. —Rich Cocksedge (Rockstar, [rockstarrecords.com](http://rockstarrecords.com) / Manic Attack, [shop.maniac-attack.de](http://shop.maniac-attack.de))

#### HE WHO CANNOT BE NAMED:

##### The Good, the Bad, and the Brutal: CD

This appears to be a concept record where the concept is—I don't know—some things are good and some things are bad? Like, the odd songs all have "good" in the title, such as "Good Kill" or "The Good Gestapo." The even songs all have

"bad" in the title. Anyway, this is the luchador mask-wearing guitar player from the Dwarves making solo music. I guess if there are fifteen-year-old suburban boys out there who need some fresh music to pretend to be juvenile delinquents to, this is for them. —Emma Alice Johnson (Beluga / Spaghetty Town / Ghost Highway)

#### HEADROOM: New Heaven: 12" EP

The first song sounds like the Stooges tried to start "Down in the Street" but dozed off. The second song could put the third Velvet Underground album to sleep. The third song sounds like if someone took the introduction from "Sweet Emotion" by Aerosmith and tried to make an eleven-minute song out of it, but nobody had a vibraslap. That said, I find this somewhat enjoyable as background music. Might you be in the market for somewhat enjoyable background music? BEST SONG "New Heaven." BEST SONG TITLE: "Skyliner." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Um... the font on the label is Gill Sans Italic? I don't have a ton to work with here. —Rev. Nørb (Ever/Never)

#### HIP PRIESTS, THE:

##### Stand for Nothing: CD

This band has a lot of releases and a significant number of them have cover art featuring naked women rubbing their breasts and crotches. Every song on this record has a guitar solo but all the solos sound

the same. There's a blurb on the back of the record complaining about a record deal that fell through and how hard it is to be a band. I feel like there's an easy solution to that problem. —Emma Alice Johnson (Gods Candy / Digital Warfare / Speedowax / Ghost Highway)

#### HIPSHOT KILLER:

##### All This Time Is Ours: LP

The opening track on Hipshot Killer's last album, *They Will Try to Kill Us All*, stated "Don't tell me we don't need another anthem" before the trio proceeded to lay down some great anthemic punk rock which gave more than a few nods in the direction of Stiff Little Fingers. *All This Time Is Ours* finds the band doing exactly the same, offering up an impressively strong collection of tracks. I can't fault this record, as it ticks box after box of what I enjoy listening to. "Red Fall Leaves" lifts my heart and soul in a way few songs manage to achieve. The recording is clear, the guitar playing is both punchy and intricate, the rhythm section offers a forceful-yet-bouncy drive, and the sequencing provides the perfect ebb and flow from start to finish. Three albums in and Hipshot Killer is still excelling at this punk rock malarkey. Note: I don't throw around comparisons to my favorite band S.L.F. willy nilly, and here it is well deserved. An early contender for my album of the year. —Rich Cocksedge (Locket Love)

#### HUNCHES, THE: Same New Thing: LP


Another album of sloppy, bluesy hell-raisin'. They take on a well-worn form and batter it to shit, mixing garage, punk, and noise into a seamless cacophony of swampy twelve-bar chaos. It's a deceptively simple style that many can play but few can play well, and these make it all seem like it's just another Sunday stroll for them. —Jimmy Alvarado (Almost Ready)

#### HUNGRY ASS YOUTH:


##### Live Fat, Die Young: CD

Hungry Ass Youth from the San Gabriel Valley are a band of obese dudes who advocate an unhealthy lifestyle of binge eating and irresponsible heavy drinking. Or at least that's what they'd like you to believe. The reality is that they're just three punks well-versed in classic Central Coast hardcore punk who take a light-hearted approach to a style of hardcore that can often come across as judgmental and preachy. The lyrics are downright ridiculous and with songs such as "My Plate, My Way," "Fat-O-Nomix," and "Food Fight" at face value it's pretty easy to dismiss Hungry Ass Youth as a joke band. Let me tell you, the music is no fucking joke. Ten songs of expertly performed hardcore punk taking cues from RKL, Nardcore, and the best Mystic records comps. At a time when hardcore is not far from being on the search field of the Urban Outfitters website, it's


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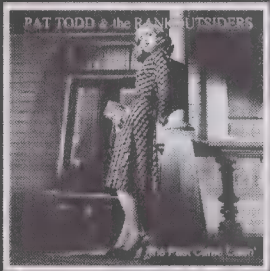
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refreshing to see that not everyone takes themselves so fucking seriously. —Juan Espinosa (Infinite Strength, [infinitestrengthrecords.com](http://infinitestrengthrecords.com))

**IL MOSTRO: Self-titled: CD**

Punky metal or very metallic punk; either way it ain't my cup o' poison. —Jimmy Alvarado (Il Mostro, [facebook.com/IlMostroBoston](http://facebook.com/IlMostroBoston))

**INDIAN SUMMER: Cherry Smash: LP**

A short-lived, late-'80s four piece from Northern Virginia recorded this session with J. Robbins back in the day. In 2017 Tom Lyle remastered the recordings so, yes, there is a Government Issue vibe in the air. But Swiz and Marginal Man could also be thrown in the boiling cauldron for extra seasoning. The recording sounds crisp and vibrant. The digital download offers up three demos to fatten up the offering. If you ever dug those bands then this belongs on your shelf. As someone once sang, this is "a limited supply" so act fast. —Sean Koepenick (Fun With Tape, [indiansummervv.bandcamp.com](http://indiansummervv.bandcamp.com))

**INVISIBLE TEARDROPS, THE:**

**Endless Winters: LP**

This is another musical venture from Jamie and Katie Barrier, who are probably best known for Pine Hill Haints. It's super melodic with keys sinking some slick hooks into the meat of these songs—very much inspired by garage rock of the '60s

and '70s. They lean into the spooky part of the garage pop pool and make some eerie sounding tunes like "Skeletal Embrace." I definitely like the darker pastiche of these songs, but feel there's something here for everyone. —Kayla Greet (Arkham / Snuffy Smiles)

**IRON BARK: Self-titled: LP**

Potent hardcore that packs much punch. They mix things between thrash and more mid-tempo fare, with hints of '80s influence and, oddly enough, a twinge of southern rock in places. Impressive throughout. —Jimmy Alvarado (SPHC)

**IT'S ALIVES, THE: Self-titled: CS**

The band identifies as B-movie punk. The picture on the front looks like something awful is about to happen, but the music is in the Ramones-meets-The Queers domain. There isn't a song over two minutes inside and isn't that what the people want? "Drinkin in My Lincoln" and "Glory Hole" are my favorites and, yes, they are about exactly what you think they are! Well played and worth seeking out. Hope these dudes break out to a wider audience. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released, [cramholezine.com](http://cramholezine.com))

**J.D. JACKSON: Hello This Way: CD**

I have a level of admiration for anyone who puts out there stuff for the world to love or hate, but this just isn't very good. Musically it has a

darker, somewhat melancholy edge that reminds me of less accomplished and more pedestrian Ryan Adams, but the vocals are what really sink the ship here. At times the vocals sound like they're being first-time-read from a lyric sheet as the recording is happening, and in soooo many places the vocal delivery just doesn't fit the melody, as if the lyrics are dactylic hexameter wedged into songs written for iambic pentameter. Nope. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Self-released)

**JUDY AND THE JERKS:**

**Roll on Summer Holidays: CS**

Hardcore loses me here and there with its continued draw towards precision, compression, and professionalism. But we'll always be glad for bands introducing extra speed into the equation. Judy And The Jerks harness the pace and keep the dose of punk looseness necessary to make songs exciting. There are no ominous interludes of highly distorted chords creating dread, but the pace of the tape leaves no room for lackadaisical dancing. "Fight" starts the tape at a full train-off-the-tracks speed. "Grub Worm" is my favorite: bouncy rhythm doing double duty as both a head nodder and pace keeper. There's an unlisted cover of Gorilla Biscuits "Biscuit Power" tying the tape together nicely. The vocals are awesome, high-pitched pissed offness. HC and punk: we all get along. —Billups Allen (Self-released)

**K. CAMPBELL:**


**"Heads Up" b/w "So Still": CS**

These two songs were not enough, and hit me like a wave of nostalgia for indie rock from the past. K. Campbell's vocals have a Ben Gibbard-meets-Elliott Smith vocal intonation on upbeat "Heads Up." Second track "So Still" is mellow, and sounds like a song that would play during a dream sequence where everything is airy and in slow motion. These two songs left me wanting more, and this cassingle has a limited run of fifty. —Cynthia Pinedo ([kcampbell.bandcamp.com](http://kcampbell.bandcamp.com))


**KICKER: Pure Drivel: LP**

I kind of avoided this band for a while. I used to stay in a building next to a punk house and I got to know the tenants. We put up with each other despite my haircut and imported clothing—and I loved bonding with them over shared favorites like His Hero Is Gone—but when they suggested I check out this "very English punk-sounding" band Kicker I didn't really take them seriously. Somehow the "ex members of" list, including folks from great bands like Dystopia and Neurosis, turned me off even more because I figured they should be sticking to what they do well and leave the whole crappy street punk thing to suburban bar bands dreaming of becoming the next Street Dogs (because that's a barometer for success these days) and damn if I'm not eating my

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words on this one because this piece of plastic—their third full length release—is chock-full of straight rippers that are a blend of the darker elements of Sub/Hum/Ans, rough melodies of Oxymoron, and the intensity of early Rudimentary Peni, but with a more rock back beat. It's such a simple, stupid sound that is the result of several people who obviously own way too many fucking records putting all them together. Great lyrics that aren't cheesy. This is cheeky in a good way. It rocks in a good way. It's punk in a good way. —Ian Wise (Tankcrimes, tankcrimesrecords.com)

**KICKER: Pure Drive! LP**

Old time East Bay legends with their second long player, featuring Mauz, Dave Mello, and the iconic Pete The Roadie, this doesn't stray too far from their debut with 4/4 punk rock with Pete's snarl sounding like a youthful Steve Ignorant. To get your bearings, think the more palatable Crass with some of the other anarcho bands from that era like Conflict, Exit Stance, and the like. Smells like patchouli and Special Brew to me. Get involved. —Tim Brooks (Tankcrimes)

**KIWI JR.: Football Money: CD**

When I was growing up and getting into music, stuff like this was called college rock. In Eau Claire, Wis., my hometown, there was a college radio station. I would listen to it for

hours, blaring jangly, angular stuff like this, but I was really just waiting for the DJ to drop a Bad Brains or Dead Kennedys song into the mix. I hated this kind of stuff. Over the years though, it's grown on me and now I can appreciate Pavement and other bands that sound like Pavement. Lyrically, this band seems to do for Toronto what The Hold Steady does for Minneapolis. I think it's cool to hear music that is rooted in a place. It just makes it more real to me. —Emma Alice Johnson (Mint)

**KRISTEN PECKHAM: KP Time! LP**

Kristen Peckham has a beautiful, velvety voice, and shows what she can do with it on this album. The opening song "My Favorite Spot" sounds like a song a seasoned lounge singer would be belting out at the piano in a dimly lit dinner spot. The album showcases Peckham's talent with accompanying instruments such as a banjo, ukulele, synthesizer, and bass, amongst others. *KP Time!* seems like a portfolio of different genres Peckham can perform, as opposed to a cohesive album telling a story. There is an alternating mix of R&B, rock'n'roll, folk, with a heavy singer/songwriter element. I couldn't get a clear vision of what Kristen Peckham is about, but I did like how soulful, honest, and a little freaky she got as she sang. "If your ass is made of chocolate, can I eat it?" on "Candy Lady." My favorite track was definitely bass heavy punk

track "Pizza," a song that ends with more honesty; chanting about getting diarrhea from eating pizza. —Cynthia Pinedo (crushgrove.com)

**LANE: Teaching Not to Pray: 10" LP**

Mid-tempo melodic punk bordering on alt rock, from France. It's by-the-numbers for the most part, though vocalist Eric Sourice has a dignified, poetic quality when he sings that makes me think of a more traditionally punk Mark Renner, or a rougher, pub version of Stuart Adamson—something about windswept countryside and grey cobbled streets. And "The Dice" feels like a downer late-'80s classic, or something in the tradition of downer late-'80s classics. Not inventive but not bad. —Matt Werts (Twenty Something, nineteensomething.fr)

**LAURICE: Bad Boy: LP**

Latest album by a long-careered Welsh musician whose early efforts allegedly signaled punk some three years before the Sex Pistols were Swankers. This latest salvo is largely comprised of lo-fi punky-wavy dance jams that, when they hit, are a spot-on blend of humor and social commentary and, when they miss, sound like the tunes from old '80s teen flick soundtracks you either skip over or leave on as background music. The latter tunes are far outweighed by the former, though, and the hint at kitsch throughout make this worth more

than a few spins. —Jimmy Alvarado (Almost Ready)

**LENNY LASHLEY'S GANG OF ONE:**

**All Are Welcome: CD**

As the climate in this country seems to turn more anti-immigrant, it's great to see a band put out a record with the statue of liberty on the cover and the message "All Are Welcome" emblazoned over it. This thoughtful, Woody Guthrie-fied punk rock band is actually a gang of more than one, led by a member of the Street Dogs, who tread similar ground. Beyond the important messages covered in these songs, there's some really great songwriting here. I love the instrumentation too. Saxophone and pedal steel hold their own against guitar, bass and drums, bringing new flavors to familiar punk rock formulas. More of this, please. —Emma Alice Johnson (Pirates Press)

**LENNY LASHLEY'S GANG OF ONE:**

**All Are Welcome: LP**

Darkbuster front man Lenny Lashley's latest side-project presents a powerful selection of melodic, catchy punk that Darkbuster fans will adore. Musically, this LP could have easily been released under the Darkbuster moniker, although I suppose the songs are a bit more personal and serious than most Darkbuster tunes. I cringe to call it "mature," but it does show a level of growth that might not be expected from a talent known

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for his incessant jocularity. There are ■ couple of faster tracks, but it's generally mid-tempo, with Lashley's voice of gold shining through on every entry. Hopefully it's checked out by more than just Darkbuster aficionados, but then again, who isn't ■ Darkbuster fan? —Art Ettinger (Pirates Press)

#### LOST SOUNDS: Memphis Is Dead: LP

Another repress of this venerated band's second album, originally released in 2001. Eighteen years hasn't diminished its impact ■ whit—simple instrumentation pushed to its sonic limits in a heady mix of new wave, synth punk, lo-fi punk, '60s psych pop, synthpunk, and death rock that roars, snarls, whispers, and rocks in wild abandon. The band is still spoken of in respectful tones and with good reason: they were one of those rare bands that was able to transcend punk's increasingly polarizing pigeonholes, generate a strong buzz around them, and actually deliver the goods. Essential to any collection. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

#### LOW FORMS:

##### Gaze to Bow/The Watchful Eye: LP

Largely fuzz-guitar indie pop stuff. There's an artsy streak in the song structures that gives off maybe a little more "emo" feel than I'm comfortable with, but on the whole the songs are well written and performed with sincerity, which might sound like ■

dismissal, but said rather because both are often in short supply. —Jimmy Alvarado (Snappy Little Numbers)

#### LOW LIFE: Downer Edn: LP

This one was a bit of a dark horse for me, but the more I listen the more I like it. Tinny guitars, swirling synths, understated melodies, and mumbled vocals converge to produce ■ fully unique sound. At first it was hard for me to reconcile all the seemingly disparate elements of *Downer Edn*, but by the third track I was totally hooked. Props to the alchemists of Low Life for turning me into a believer. —Simone Carter (Goner)

#### MAMMOTH PENGUINS: There's No Fight We Both Can't Win: LP/CD

First off, this is a great band name. Second off, Mammoth Penguins kicks off the album with a pair of equally great tracks in "Closure" and "Dick Move," which immediately endears the band to me. It's indie pop done extremely well and although those first two tracks are easily the strongest here, the rest of the album still manages to be a darn good listen. Emma Kupa's voice provides a gorgeous, languid delivery—apart from the occasional burst of energy—and that's what I look forward to the most from this record. Good stuff. —Rich Cocksedge (Fika, [info@fikarecordings.com](mailto:info@fikarecordings.com), [fikarecordings.com](http://fikarecordings.com))

#### MAN-EATERS: Self-titled: ■

From the same piss-flooded alleys of Chicago as Tarantula and Culo come Man-Eaters with a six-song demo of degenerate punk that is as rockin' as it is destructive. Imagine you just got off work and you're tired as shit but don't want to go home. There are some sketchy looking guys in front of the local bar shooting dice and smoking cigs. They see your Dictators button and strike up a conversation. Before you know it you're in the bar with them and having a great time after such a shit day on the job. You go take a piss and come back and your new friends are gone. And so is your bike that you left locked up outside. You're a little too drunk to care but you remember they handed you a flier to their bands' show. You decide that you're going to the show and you're going to take it out on someone. You worked right into the Man-Eaters' plans. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released, [maneaterspropaganda@gmail.com](mailto:maneaterspropaganda@gmail.com))

#### MANTS, THE: Bug Rock Invasion: 10"

Do you remember the garage rock explosion of the mid-'90s? Well gather around because old man Stranglehold is going to tell you a tale of the days of yore. A tale of vintage guitars, organs, and pinstriped suits. A tale of twitching antennae, crushing mandibles, and the enslavement of humanity by the Mants of Planet X (aka Calgary, Alberta). Many years after those "gory daze," those lovable

insectoid ramblers relocated to the damp climate of Victoria, BC. *Bug Rock Invasion* is The Mants' first outing since their 2016 debut *Do the Dummy* (still trying to figure out why it took twenty years to get that first album out. They must be operating on Planet X time) and it is more of the rip-roaring rock we've come to expect from the segmented trio: fuzzy, crunchy, and nothing but fun. I love the fact that The Mants have been in my life for damn near twenty-five years and I, for one, welcome my Mantish overlords. Bow to your masters! —Ty Stranglehold (Chaputa!)

#### MARRIAGE MATERIAL:

##### Keeping the Love Alive, Part 2: EP

I must confess that Marriage Material's first 7" passed me by. I have no excuse to offer as to why I didn't check it out; it just is what it is. Now ■ quartet having apparently been a trio, Marriage Material does a darn good job of mixing the driven delivery of Radioactivity—the single is mixed by Jeff Burke of Radioactivity/Marked Men—with the slightly off-kilter approach of Toys That Kill. It took me a few listens to put those pieces together, but once I had that enlightenment, it was as clear as day. Despite those reference points, the band still manages to forge its own musical identity with much aplomb. This stands out for the fact that all four songs are all equally good. The quality is high from start

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to finish, with memorable hooks and choruses aplenty. I've already started waiting (impatiently) for an album. —Rich Cooksedge (Dirt Cult, [dirtcultrecords@gmail.com](mailto:dirtcultrecords@gmail.com), [dirtcultrecords.wordpress.com](http://dirtcultrecords.wordpress.com))

#### MARSHMALLOW COAST:

##### *Memory Girl: LP*

*Not punk.* What is it? I'm not sure. What I do know for sure: it's slow-moving electro-indie synth pop with grooves and is way out of my comfort zone for reviewing. *Memory Girl* sounds like easy-listening Postal Service with '80s Casio musings? I'm sure they have a great fan base just waiting for them. I'm just not sure if it's here at Razorcake. However it's on HHBTM, so perhaps if you are familiar with the label and like their releases, then a serious heads up. It's a super chill listen, and not offensive in the least, so if you like offensive (and I know many of you do), steer clear. —Camylle Reynolds (HHBTM)

#### MINDS-R-CONTROLLED:

##### *Alternate Facts: CS*

An Australian hardcore punk band with an affinity for American politics. Songs about Trump, pharma-bro Martin Shkreli, and the Cold War. Musically, they're a well-oiled machine that sounds an awful lot like the newest Black Flag recordings (yup, *that* album!). I personally prefer my hardcore sporting warts and a chipped tooth. Minds-R-Controlled

have got the angst down but miss the mark when it comes to the effectiveness of their squeaky clean take on hardcore. —Juan Espinosa (Self-released, [minds-r-controlled.com](http://minds-r-controlled.com) / Step Change)

#### MINDS-R-CONTROLLED:

##### *Life Time EP: CS*

This Australian band brings four tracks of progressive, gruff punk reminiscent of Jake Levee projects Forth Rotor and Canadian Rifle. Minds-R-Controlled own up to that well-tread Pegboy/D4 sound, but swirl in other flavors from less-expected sources like The Minutemen and Fugazi. It's a sound that subtly weaves its influences into the larger picture creating a sound that's big and cohesive. Tracks repeat on both sides to ensure many future flippings. —Daryl (Self-released, [minds-r-controlled.com](http://minds-r-controlled.com) / Step Change)

#### MOTOSIERRA: Self-titled: LP

These guys definitely like to party. Uruguay's Motosierra play beer-drinkin', headbain', unadulterated, and unfiltered rock'n'roll. I'm getting heavy Motörhead and Metallica vibes, and maybe even a dab of Sepultura, which I'm more than okay with. A nicely produced record, Motosierra's self-titled might not win any awards for originality, but it *will* make you want to take a trip to Uruguay to catch them at a show.

—Simone Carter (Little Butterfly, [info@littlebutterflyrecords.com](mailto:info@littlebutterflyrecords.com), [littlebutterflyrecords.com](http://littlebutterflyrecords.com))

#### MR. CALIFORNIA

##### *AND THE STATE POLICE:*

##### *I'm Gonna Kick You in the Head: CS*

The solo recording project of Terry Ryan, Mr. California And The State Police calls to mind some of the early four-track recordings of Devo at their most abrasive. Originally released on CD and vinyl back in 2003, this seventeenth anniversary reissue is the first time *I'm Gonna Kick You in the Head* has appeared on cassette. While this might seem a strange anniversary to re-release an album, it's appropriate for the weirdness that is Mr. California. —Paul J. Comeau (Crass Lips)

#### MURO:

##### *Ataque Hardcore Punk: 12" EP*

A North American reissue of this Bogota band's 2017 album. Mostly mid-tempo hardcore—not too fast, not too wild—is where most of the stuff on here sits, with definite hints of South American 'core of the past in evidence. The songs are strong, with much sophistication in structure while managing to stay very much within the parameters of "punk." Limited to five hundred copies with some cool extras added to the packaging. Good stuff all around. —Jimmy Alvarado (Beach Impediment)

#### MUTANT SCUM: Self-titled: LP

When I looked at this one, my first thought was "please don't be thrash metal." Well, it's not! But sometimes it leans on that genre a bit. The cover was done by the same artist who does stuff for Municipal Waste and Mastodon, which is what made my brain wanna categorize it before listening. Surprising, for me at least, it's as sludgy as the cover is slimy: heavy guitar, droney guttural vocals, mid-tempo drumming. And then they kick things into gear for a few good measures. Some of the songs are a bit thrashy in the middle—in the Sleep tribute style that most of their songs take on. I love the underground mutants in the sewer theme. While the harder, hair farmer stuff isn't really my thing, I do like a good schtick. All the songs are mutant/underground/sewer themed. Like if C.H.U.D. was a band. —Kayla Greet (Handstand)

#### NAKED TUNGS, THE:

##### *Distract Myself: CD*

This four-song EP is reminiscent of rootsier-inspired new wave from the '90s. The second song, "Warming Up," moves at a mid-tempo rock pace with nicely done blasé vocal delivery. The rest of the songs move at a lackadaisical pace with a little swing. The last song, "Making You Guess," ends the EP with some Sonic Youth-esque chord beating. If you're into



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this sort of thing, the songs are well conceived and well recorded: definitely worth checking out. —Billups Allen (Self-released)

#### NIGHT SLAVES: III: LP

Gloomy synth pop. —Jimmy Alvarado (Night Slaves, facebook.com/slavestothemight)

#### NINETY SIX GHOSTS:

##### *The War in End All Wars: 7"*

The first song reminds me of a bit of the pre-Strike Anywhere band Inquisition: heartfelt and aggressive but with a real melodic undercurrent to the overall sound. Anyone who misses that late-'90s sound or is a fan of the hardcore punk back catalog of Louisville-based label Initial Records will likely find a whole lot to like here. —Mike Frame (Snubbed)

#### NO BLUES:

##### *A Collection of Love Songs: LP*

An interesting mix of thuddy punk and pop, sorta like the Spits with a bit more melodic sense and a yen to sing love songs. Songs are catchy and blissfully short, direct and not saturated with maudlin pretense. —Jimmy Alvarado (Schizophrenic)

#### NO!SE: Mass Apathy: 12" Single

The purpose behind this is worth the admission alone. The band and label are donating all profits from this record to victims of public shootings, especially those involving children.

The vinyl is single-sided with a silkscreen on the back and bullets die cut into the vinyl. The track is an anthem dedicated to the victims of these tragedies. Support this record and this cause. —Ryan Nichols (Pirates Press)

#### NONZOO: Wazoo: CS

Chicago-based Nonzoo's *Wazoo* is full of spooky experimental art punk. It's a cacophonous wall of noise accented by electronic beeps and boops. The vocals and lyrics have a poetic and poignant tone that reminds me of Joy De Vivre and Eve Libertine with lines like "I object in Eden to augmented Eve." If you liked Crass's *Penis Envy* but wished they had twenty-plus more instruments, this is a record for you. —Lorien Lamarr (Already Dead)

#### OLD FIRM CASUALS:

##### *Holger Danske: LP*

I'm pals with this lot, so if you think you're getting an unbiased opinion, you're tripping. Mercifully, I don't gotta lie. The boys have pulled it off! Keeping the street rock'n'roll backbone they started with, they have opened up the playing field taking nods and winks from NWOBH, AC/DC, Motörhead, and even some of the dodgy later Rejects LPs. The addition of second guitar brings a thickness to the sound and the recording sounds like they are a fucking stadium band. I can see the band really coming together with all members bringing pasts and

presents to the table. Don't get me wrong—this is still punk as fuck—but they have transcended the bootboy world into something totally new and interesting. KILLLLLLLLLLLLLLL. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press)

#### OUTDOOR VELOUR:

##### *Our Songs: 2 CD*

I don't typically enjoy double albums, 'cause why not just make two separate records? In this case, it's two discs of nothing but covers—a really fucking weird mix of cover songs. This isn't novelty, it's songs that members of this band genuinely love. To me, it feels like they picked from a mystery box of leftovers before the Wherehouse Music chain closed down. There are songs from The Jesus And Mary Chain, Beach Boys, Against Me!, The Beatles, Crosby Stills Nash And Young, Masked Intruder, Mountain Goats, and The Who. (They really nail the They Might Be Giants and Atom And His Package songs.) It's quite eclectic, to say the least. Every track holds on to a bit of Outdoor Velour's original sound and puts a bit of their own imprint on the songs. I feel that with so many different genres, instruments, and influences they may have spread themselves too thin. They cover Green Day's "Pulling Teeth," yet somehow manage to take all the bite out of it. This could have been a great intro record to someone who's just trying to find their musical tastes and are unsure of what path to go

down, but these tracks need a punch up. They all have a general fuzziness and the vocals seem far away in the mix. Even though all the notes are in the right place and the timing is tight, it all feels kinda sleepy. —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

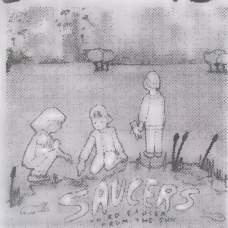
#### PALE LIPS: After Dark: LP

Pale Lips makes zero apologies about their Ramones riffs and Nikki And The Corvettes rock'n'roll stylings. Totally in line with Natalie Sweet's recent release, it's brimming with power pop and saccharine-sweet bubble gum. Tight bass and straight ahead rock'n'roll riffs keep things simple and catchy. They've got songs called "Hanky Panky Franky" and "Doo-Wop Showaddywaddy." It's like a cheesy B movie: Switchblade bad girls chewing bubble gum while twisting their hair in a dark alley, waiting to lure in some greaser named Johnny who did one of their gal pals wrong. Lesson? Don't fuck with them or you'll get cut... in the sweetest way possible. —Camille Reynolds (Gods Candy / Alien Snatch / Spaghetty Town)

#### PANDEMIX: In Condemnation: LP

This record is so good, I worry that I am not going to do it to justice. It's politically charged monologue-punk, with equal parts hardcore, skate punk, and Red Dons-style post-punk. The record comes at you like a sonic blast, unrelenting until the final note.

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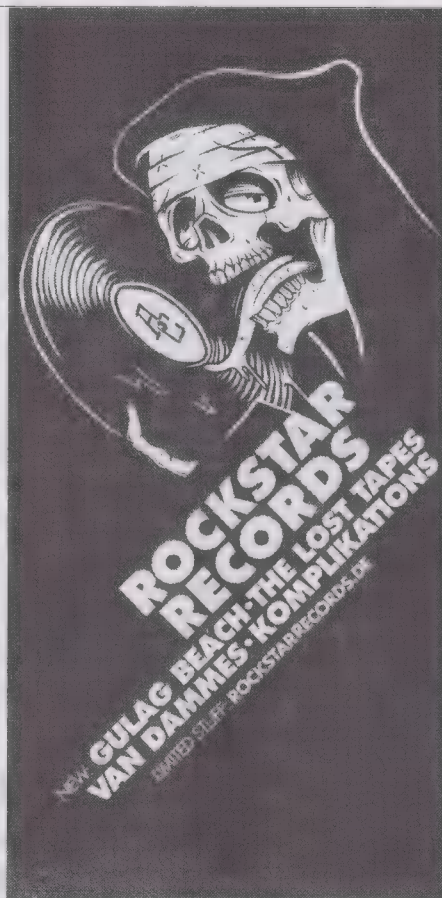
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Say Goodbye cd - Radon More Of Their Lies cd - Spokenest  
Gone Gone Gone 12" - Leatherface live in Melbourne cd  
Hard Charger Bad Omers lp & tape - The Rebel Spell  
all cds & Last Run tape - Santa Ana Knights Knight School 7"  
Squadron (Atlanta/Moscow) s/t 7" Leatherface Tribute  
double cd (a few left!) - Meditation Warm Places 12" ■ cd  
School Damage Battered Lives LP - Future Virgins collection LP  
shirts 'n computer hardware 'n shit - shipping from Canada  
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It, at times, made me wonder if the entire thing was done in one take since the songs move into each other at such a breakneck pace. This record is intimidating as hell! The rose on the cover, being stomped by a high-heeled shoe, is representative of your brain which is about to get its ass kicked. The closest band I could think to compare Pandemix to is PEARS, and I wouldn't say that really nails it. The wildness is there, though, the unpredictability. You never know when the song is going to make a sudden breakneck turn into something else entirely, and that's amazing. It's been a while since a record so viscerally grabbed me by the opening notes and refused to let go. It's been a few days since my first go and I'm still thinking about this record when I'm not listening to it. My highest recommendation, we could all use a moment to check this one out. —Gwen Static (Dirt Cult / Boss Tuneage)

**PEOPLE'S TEMPLE PROJECT / SLEEPER WAVE: Meditative Exercises in Body Deprivation Recovery and Cross Brain Wave Frequency Modulation: LP**

I'm unsure if this is two separate artists, but I am sure that whatever collaboration this is, ultimately, it was meant to confuse the passerby just a little. It's hard core math rock that beats against your skull with the intensity of every drum hit. It offers a presentation of being some sort of

meditative self-help record, which is charming enough for a majority of the tracks. The opening side eventually delves into noise rock of the chaotic variety. The hypnotic motions of the record definitely seek to emulate a meditative quality, but it does count on you being one of those people who finds machine noise to be oddly comforting. The Sleeper Wave side of the record is generally more palatable in the traditional sense, with songs reminiscent of the early '90s Dischord Records catalog. Overall, interesting, if a bit trying at times. —Gwen Static (IFB, ifbrecords.com)

**PINE HILL HAINTS: Ghost Dance: LP**

Ten years after its initial release on K Records, *Ghost Dance* has been re-issued on the Haints' home base label Arkam. As far as the punk people playing acoustic instruments game goes, this band and this album in particular are the shining-fucking-star in the infinite universe of lesser acts. There's just so much atmosphere on this record. You can't avoid being transported into their world with welcoming arms for another raucous night of "smash skull blues." Damn near perfect. Long live the Haints! —Daryl (Arkam)

**PORCUPINE:**

**What You've Heard Isn't Real: 12" EP**  
Purely by happenstance, I'm listening to this on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kurt Cobain's death. I mention this

not because he had anything to do with this album, or that there's any overt influence on the songs contained herein, but rather because this very much sounds reminiscent of that last era when the underground poked its head above water. It felt like rock music was more than a disposable distraction and "alternative" was something that at least *felt* like it was more than just another marketing niche. The songs here are smart and impeccably crafted, with lots of noodly guitar lines that alternate between fragile and muscley, a rock-solid rhythm section, and, at times, have the feel of a more cerebral, Midwestern Teenage Fanclub. There's also a gorgeous cover of "Standing by the Sea," originally by current bassist Greg Norton's old band, Hüsker Dü, that had me cranking it up, closing my eyes, and enjoying the feeling of it washing over me like I did when I first heard the original in a Spokane basement in 1984. Beautiful, catchy, and spot-on from start to finish. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Broke)

**POSTAGE: Flexi EP: 7" Flexi**

Fast, hook-laden melodic punk anthems with strong and sorta-snotty vocals. These three songs blow by fast but make plenty of time for dynamics and shout-along choruses that are repeated just enough to inspire a singalong on the first listen. From Albany. Good band. —Chris Terry (Paper+Plastick)

**POWERSOLO:**

**Transfixing Motherfucker: 7" EP**

Danish two piece who are really rolling with the classic rock'n'roll vibe. They take it further aesthetically with the 7" itself looking like a classic 45 and the great note at the bottom that reads "Design: We Don't Like Art." This EP seems about right for the band, so fans of will be pleased and others likely won't take much notice. —Theresa W. (Slovenly)

**PREMONITIONS, THE:**

**"Give Back What You Take" b/w "Sun Goes Down": 7" EP**

Very classic vibe—bouncy—reminiscence of The Animals with grungier vocals. The keys add a real '70s creep, especially on "Sun Goes Down," which brings in a good combo of early punk sneering with rock'n'roll oh-ohs. Definitely for fans of the kind of riff on throwback rock but with a few moments that bring in a more surfy element: Murder City Devils meets The Beach Boys. —Theresa W. (Outro)

**PRIORS: Call for You: 7" EP**

Three shots of visceral, virulent punk—straightforward, no bullshit, not long-winded. If Smogtown were interested in snotty garage, I could see them and these kids finding much over which to commiserate. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

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**PRISONER: *Sounds of the Idiot*: CS**

Brandon from Dude Jams playing competent bedroom pop. This release stands out from his previous fare and it shows you a few tricks in its bag immediately. You can't help but notice the use of piano and minor Americana and country trappings throughout the record. Overall, it's pretty good, but a few tracks could have used a little more time in the oven. Some songs devolve into sloppy pop noise barrages, with a few too many guitars working melodies in. If you're looking for something that kind of sounds like a folkier Off With Their Heads, this ain't a bad option. —Gwen Static (Self-released, [prisonertexas.bandcamp.com](http://prisonertexas.bandcamp.com))

**PROF. FUZZ 63, THE: *Kirvin Streetman's Sugar Bride Blues*: CD**

The Professor Fuzz 63 is a cool, lo-fi, rockin' trio from Dallas, and they're great, offering quirky, humorous lo-fi pop songs with just enough dirgey guitar to keep this firmly on the "rock" side of the spectrum. I hear a mix of The Cramps, Velvet Underground, and Tom Waits influence in this recording while keeping a sound all their own. Songs with titles like "Nudist Buddhist Judas Priest Fan" and "Hip Priest Hip Replacement" are plenty witty, mixing the fun with a huge dose of ridiculous. Any tune paying tribute to Mark E. Smith and The Fall is okay in my book. There's a lot to like here, and I like it a lot!

Check it out! —Mark Twistworthy (Dreamy Life)

**RAD OWL: *Madison Beast*: LP/CD**

This album blows me away, I'm not kidding. On first hearing the guitar intro to "Hannah Barbera," I felt like all was right with the world and that nothing could stop that feeling. Rarely do bands connect with me so immediately, but Rad Owl managed to do so and maintained a high level of quality right across the fourteen tracks on the CD version (only twelve on the LP). It reminds me of the output of a variety of labels from the last thirty years or so, but to narrow it down, I'd give a nod to Epitaph, Cruz, and Boss Tuneage, the latter, unsurprisingly, being involved with this release. If you dig older bands like ALL and Gameface, and/or newer groups like Debt Neglector and Despero, this is well worth checking out. —Rich Cocksedge (Boss Tuneage / Waterslide)

**RADON: *More of Their Lies*: LP**

I mean, fuck. Nobody told me that this new Radon record easily holds up with anything that they put out in the '90s, and I don't take that shit lightly because those records used to be some holy grail shit for me. But yeah, this is really, really good. The same humorous songwriting is present, along with all the hooks—all of them. A lot of bands can write a catchy-as-fuck melodic punk song, but nobody

does it quite like Radon, a band who has mastered the craft of writing about hilariously typical things with a cynical slant. This is chock full of the kind of songs that get stuck in your head hours after listening to them and you can't get them out. I needed this record, and you probably need it too. —Mark Twistworthy (Dead Broke, [deadbrokerecords.com](http://deadbrokerecords.com) / Creep)

**RATIONS NOISE / UNKNOWN RIVER DRIVERS: *Dronestruck / Remains*: Split LP**

This is an important album. Complex, equally cathartic and resounding in despair, politically agitating and agitated clarion. The Unknown River Driver side is grit and gravel, guitar-based punk: painful personal content with thoughtful social and political nuance. It expands and contracts, saturated with sadness and note bends. Standouts for me are two of the more catchy contributions, "Isaiah" and "Misery & Liberty." The latter begins with a danceable drum beat/hand clap hook which acts as a lovely counterpoint to the lyrics and emotional tone of the guitars. "It worsens until I don't feel." It's an incendiary representation of feelings I've known so well, when we live so long with suffering it becomes familiar; when pain and despair dwell so comfortably in our bones and bodies our awareness of them dulls. For the Rations Noise

side: a lesson in so much. Based on this being a noise project centering on drone warfare, I expected something far more aggressive, dissonant, and brutally oppressive. Instead what unfolds is a beautiful, often gentle and pensive, cinematic and sweeping piece of experimental music. Imagine a collaboration between Explosions In The Sky and 3RAINIAC and you'll perhaps have an idea of what transpires here. Rather than being entirely an exposé on the horrors of murder perpetrated by unmanned attack vehicles, this album feels like impassioned education. A pyre of honor to the activists who seek to expose and heal the crimes of a war profiteering nation. It's inspiring. It's vital. "Our tax dollars for death... Forgive us." —CJ Miller (86'd / Different Kitchen / Tor Johnson / Ersatz Reality / Farsot / Rad Girlfriend)

**REQ'D: *Fall in Love on Hate Street*: LP**

If this slab of would-be outlaw Americana does as little for you as it does for me, you certainly can't blame the packaging: There's a full-color gatefold sleeve, thick, colored vinyl, and a slickly arted-up cover photo of the desert wind blowing the main dude's blonde hair into his beard stubble while his muscular and tattooed arm plucks a gleaming acoustic guitar in the arid wasteland of what I assume is Northern California (if not, please sub in the correct arid

# SHATTERED PLATTER



Matthew Hutchison  
Music Publicity and Photo Media Events Book  
[www.mattandjess.com](http://www.mattandjess.com)



**SOW THREAT**  
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wasteland as required). The main problem, is, really, the main dude's—Sluggo's—voice. It doesn't have the brawny timbre one'd expect from looking at the guy—nor does it have much by way of energy, character, or flair. It also isn't so amazingly incongruent that it demands to be accepted on its own terms, just for the sheer balls of it showing up where one wouldn't think it would belong. It's just kinda... there. There's no sin in one's musical reach exceeding one's grasp (if there was, I'd be about thirty-eight circles deep in Hell right now), but I can't say it makes for particularly compelling listening. Bring back Michael "P.S." Hayes! **BEST SONG:** "Fool," originally recorded as "Don't Let the Sunshine Fool Ya" by Texas singer/songwriter Townes Van Zandt in 1972. I was not hip to this dude before this record, so there's that. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Moon." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** All eleven of this record's songs have a one-word title. —Rev. Norb (Wondertaker)

#### RESONARS, THE: *No Exit*: LP

The Resonars are back with twelve tracks of upbeat retro-psych tunes highlighting the band's signature heavy-thumping bass runs and rising smoke vocal harmonies. A long time solo project of Tucson, Ariz.'s studio engineer supreme Matt Rendon, *No Exit* is the band's sixth album. Up to now Rendon has recorded the band's

albums on his own. Once a studio-only project, he has expanded with the regular use of a live band, and The Resonars' latest effort finds Rendon collaborating with other Tucson musicians. Resonars' live drummer Johnnie Rinehart takes over drumming duties on several songs on the album. "Gotta Get Out" reunites Rendon with Travis Spillers, his ex-partner in the Tucson punk envoy The Knockout Pills. The two rock out excellent vocal harmonies over a mid-paced, Kinks-style bouncer. *Lenguas Largas'* Ricky Shimo also appears performing some of the melodic bass lines serving as a skeleton for stylish layering of fuzz guitar and echo. The Resonars have a unique approach on the retro psych sound without being schtick, contrived, or devoid of style. —Billups Allen (Trouble In Mind)

#### REVEREND BEAT-MAN & ISOBEL GARCIA: *Baile Bruja Muerto*: CD

One can pretty much assume when listening to anything Reverend Beat-Man is involved in that you're in for an interesting ride, and this two-person project is no exception. Mixed into the usual garage rock palate he prefers is a hodge-podge of diverse oddness. Looking for a twangy cover of Chavela Vargas or Venom? They've got you covered. A slinky cover of the Doors' "Love Me Two Times" that evokes visions of tattered, lonely barrooms? Yup,

one's here. Add in guitars drenched in reverb and fuzz, plunking Farfisa, stomping drums both real and machine-derived, tri-lingual vocals, and an assortment of moods and you have yourself a helluva party. —Jimmy Alvarado (Voodoo Rhythm)

#### ROBOTS, LES: "Do the Robot!" b/w "One Way Ticket to the Moon": 7"

This 7" is less than six minutes of surfy rock/space robot 1960s movie music influenced by The Shadows. The two tracks include a Selmer Clavioline and Hohner Multimonica, which are the perfect additions to the space vibe. "Do the Robot!" sounds like it would be the perfect Space Mountain soundtrack song. "One Way Ticket to the Moon" starts out with a surf-meets-old-western guitar build up, and continues to elevate its sounds as I imagine a rocket ship headed toward the moon. The song intensifies as the rocket ship hits space, soft vocal "aah ahhs" insinuate that the mission has been a success, and the song fades out as if to signify that the trip to the moon has been achieved. If only space travel was this easy! —Cynthia Pinedo (Spazz)

#### SELF-EVIDENT:

##### *Lost Inside the Machinery*: CD

The hype sticker is in Japanese so that doesn't help me too much in this case. There is a helpful "RIYL" sentence (for the lazy reviewer) at the bottom that name checks Faraquet, Jawbox,

Traindodge, Shiner, Karate, Fugazi, Slint, Shellac, Don Caballero, and The Jesus Lizard. Self-Evident mines the math rock field, without a doubt. Their sound winds around your listening ears like a sinewy snake looking for lunch. The theme seems to be: is technology becoming too powerful? Is it taking over humanity? Will robots overtake our individuality? Answers probably won't come over a cup of coffee, but you could start here. —Sean Koepenick (Stiff Slack)

#### SIN BAD / BAD WIG:

##### *Sin Bad Wig: Split*: LP

Bad Wig are absolute rockers and they know what they're doing, though I wish they had more song title imagination. Their sludgepop song is called "Sludgepop." They have a song called "No Future." "Machinehead" moves lightly into Tony Molina territory, melodic and sugary and fuzzy, feeling like a real hit. Sin Bad are standard pop punkers following a formula, and the formula works best on "Chores," a chiming upbeat blast about exhaustion. I know what they mean. I'm tired of being sore, too! —Matt Werts (Kitschy Spirit)

#### SIN BAD / BAD WIG:

##### *Sin Bad Wig: Split*: LP

Bad Wig: Fun, mostly upbeat punk with distorted vocals and occasional forays into laid-back pop territory, like on the aptly titled "Sludgepop." Some fuzzed-out, slightly dreamy



stuff, with some nice guitar interplay here and there; think of a more chill Tenement and you're getting there, or even, on something like "No Future," a little Replacements-y. Huh. Sin Bad: Propulsive pop stuff with Audrey Jennings' vocals trading off with Ben Woyak's and reminding me of This Is My Fist or Bridge And Tunnel. The nondescript packaging might have some people skipping over this, but it's definitely, absolutely worth a listen. Two solid Wisconsin bands, and the sleeper hit of this review batch for me. Recommended if you like the dirty pop stuff. —Keith Rosson (Kitschy Spirit)

#### SINGING LUNGS, *Groan*: CD

I saw *School of Rock* on Broadway awhile back, and some of the songs on this album reminded me of what I heard on stage, except without as many repetitive choruses. The band is talented and plays really well together. The vocalist's voice sounds like he has a strong musical theatre background. He has great range, but the vocals really stand out against the music, making it hard to focus on the songs as a whole. The lyrics throughout the love songs are endearing, and the backing music reminds me of The Lemonheads. The song titles reinforce the idea of a musical, and titles such as "Home," "I Wanna Watch TV with You," and "Where I Belong" sound like the titles of different acts. I imagine "I'll Be Right Here," being the closing number of a musical, where the star

tells their partner that he is willing to do anything domestic (doing taxes, packing lunches, making dinner, and other housework), to prove devotion. The chorus of "there's nowhere else that I would rather be" really drives home the wholesomeness of the song, and would be the perfect note to end the production on. —Cynthia Pinedo (singinlungs.bandcamp.com)

#### SINGING LUNGS: *Groan*: LP

Midwestern punky pop with a bit of a rock streak hiding not too far underneath. —Jimmy Alvarado (Singing Lungs)

#### SMASH THE STATUES: *FORVM*: LP

Energetic and angry melodic hardcore from the Netherlands which spits anti-authority, politically charged venom at a plethora of targets, including the rise of fascism in the band's native country. Musically, Smash The Statues is the more boisterous and in-your-face version of fellow countrymen Antillectual, but both outfits tread the same path in terms of message. *FORVM* contains a good mix of songs but it's "Shores of Europe" and "The Eternal Nation" which really get my blood pumping, as they are blasts of highly adrenalized punk rock. Very good indeed. —Rich Cocksedge (White Russian)

#### SOMEDAY BEST: *The Empress*: 7"

Bummed-out four-chord "I'm a jerk? No, you're a jerk"-core that calls

exes "princesses," accuses someone of having a "lame attitude," and makes multiple references to sitting alone and buzzed while waiting for someone who is mad at you to call. —Chris Terry (Rabbit Rabbit)

#### ST. PLASTER: *Self-titled*: LP

Not sure what you can believe on the internet these days, but if the band's own posts are not in jest, this is St. Plaster's first album and will be followed by the outfit calling it a day in October. I must admit that this is a new one on me but *c'est la vie*. In the studio St. Plaster is a two piece and it does a good job of knocking out punk rock that is big on the influences of Bad Religion and Unwritten Law. The good thing is that there's a fresh-sounding quality to the whole package and I've found myself thoroughly enjoying most of this, with the exception being a few tracks which are way too poppy for my liking. Whether it's deliberate or not, there is a track called "Seriously, Fuck the Modern Man," which continues the Bad Religion link and it's pretty good too. On the whole, a decent album. —Rich Cocksedge (White Russian / Bearded Punk)

#### STAGES IN FAITH:

"Same Craig" b/w "Floodlights": 7" Occasionally, a band turns up where every old fucker you've known for decades keeps telling you about. As soon as I heard Stages In Faith's demo, I knew they were something

really special. This, their second single, was released by Clint who hasn't put a record out on over ten years and is known for his taste and voracious record collecting. SIF rip the heart out of the late-'80s DC sound before it went too soft: Embrace, Rites Of Spring, and inject some of the speed of West Coast band of old Verbal Assault and Reason To Believe. It's an almost perfect stew of those sounds, the passion, off-kilter guitars, and power. Let's not forget this lot is from London and so there's a wee dash of Englishness they can't hide. 'Tis is one of my records of 2019 so far. Dig around and you'll find, as I'm sure Clint doesn't have a bloody website. Wonderful! —Tim Brooks (Shortfuse, no address listed)

#### STEREO CREEPS: *Suck*: LP

Huge riffs filtered through enough scuzz to create catchy, unclean edges. These songs lurch, swagger, and feel instantly familiar even as this Seattle three-piece throws and breaks stuff. It's cutting enough to warrant repeated listening. Fans of Alice In Chains, especially, will find a lot to like here. —Michael T. Fournier (Self-released)

#### SWEET REAPER: *Self-titled*: CS

I am doing my best to understand the cover art. The best I could come up with is that if this is your profession, expect an early death? The music itself is in the garage rock vein and this should please most fans of this

NATURAL CAUSES  
JOINT D≠  
EXCESSIVE CRUELTY  
EXTRUING UP  
S.L.I.P.  
DAVIDIANS  
SORRY  
STATE  
RECORDS  
STAY PUNK

we shake our  
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NEUROTIC FICTION, MUNCIE GIRL II, DOBBYEU  
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genre. "Other Side" bounces along to good effect, and the world did need a song about a cruise ship so thank you. Does the band wear their Halloween costumes shown on the inside cover when they play live? That would be cool. —Sean Koeppenick (Burger)

**TALBOT ADAMS: Deleted Songs, Instruments, Projects: CS**

Talbot Adams was the linchpin of Mississippi's Black And Whites, who did an admirable job fusing melodic Ramonesy buzz to a gnarly garage chug about ten or twelve years ago, then quickly vamoosed. I haven't really followed his solo career, to be honest. This tape is ten songs about love's labors lost and such, with the Talbster on guitar and vocals, backed by a bass player and a drummer who treats his cymbals like they have cooties or are infested with some manner of deadly, flesh necrotizing bacteria. The tunes have a nice punkish simplicity to them, but the speeds range from mid-tempo to downright slow, and we're not exactly talking Costello-esque songwriting nor Westerberg-level soul-baring here; as a result, interest levels wane pretty swiftly. If you were watching these guys at a show, you'd probably listen to a few songs to be polite, and then go see if any of your friends were outside smoking pot. I wonder if any of my friends are outside smoking pot? BEST SONG: "Lies." BEST

SONG TITLE: "Sitting Barefoot in the Car" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I missed everything but the last song of the Black And Whites set when I saw them in Austin in 2008, because my girlfriend at the time wanted to go get something to eat. —Rev. Nørh (Spacecase)

**TALK WRONG: Feral Bearings: 12" EP**

Holy shit, I dig this. Five-song burner of sped-up pop punk shit along the lines of Bundles or Dear Landlord. This came with one of those dumb promo one-sheets, and I gotta say, the bands they're name-dropping here actually ring true. Don't let the unassuming cover fool you: This is high energy, buoyant bummersville punk stuff of some very high caliber. Recommended. —Keith Rosson (Ersatz Reality)

**THIS MEANS WAR: Heart Strings: LP**

Self-described "street punk/oi" that is very much in a modern, melodic approach. I guess people call this street punk but it's so slick and anthemic it just sounds like pop punk. If you're into that style then this is worth checking out as it is full of hooks and the guitar leads provide some variety. Lyrics about unity and positivity and other stuff. I'm sure these are all really nice guys and they obviously work hard, I just prefer my oi to be antisocial

and sound like it was recorded in a toilet. —Ian Wise (Pirates Press)

**THUGS, LES: Electric Troubles: 12" EP**

The second Les Thugs LP gets a swank reissue, courtesy of the fine folks at Nineteen Something. Originally released in 1987, it's hard to convey to newer scene people how exciting international punk was in punk's first couple of decades. Unlike some other versions that also include the songs from *Dirty White Race*, this is a pure version of *Electric Troubles* as it was originally tracked. Les Thugs didn't fit in with what was going on in 1983 when they initially formed because hardcore was all the rage, with older '77 sounds fading away. They bridged that gap, playing a faster version of that earlier style. These songs don't sound the slightest bit dated today, a testament to how ahead of its time *Electric Troubles* was. I enjoyed revisiting it big time, and I suspect that a new generation of fans will welcome Les Thugs with open arms. —Art Ettinger (Nineteen Something)

**THUGS, LES: Tout Doit Disparaître: LP**

I only received this LP two weeks ago, but it's already become my most heavily rotated album of 2019. And hey, even though it's a reissue, it totally counts. Les Thugs' 1999 opus, *Tout Doit Disparaître*, was rereleased by French record label Nineteen

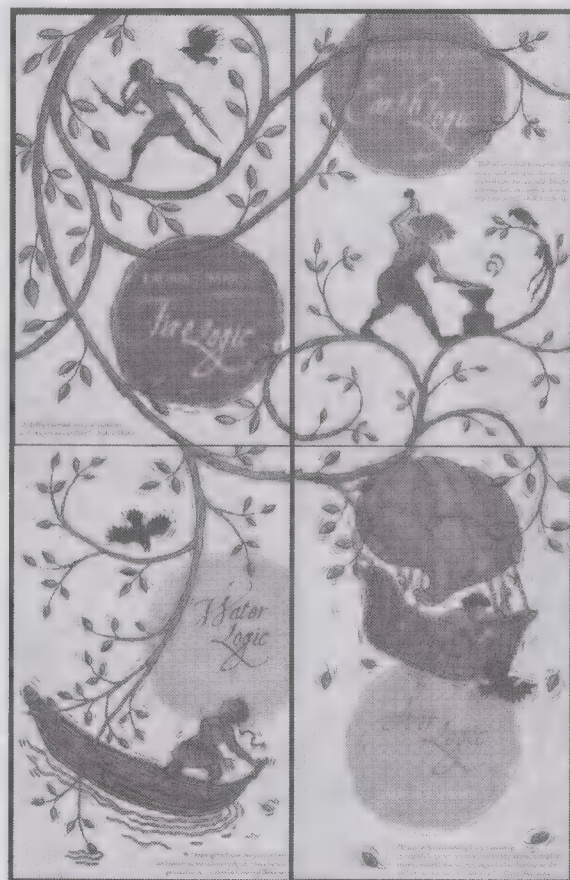
Something, and I'm super happy it was. This album makes me feel all the feels. Right out the gate I was hit with a romantic wave of nostalgia reminiscent of when I first discovered My Bloody Valentine. Sung in both English and French, Les Thugs take their listener on a journey through the melody-steeped sounds of the '90s—a little Heatmiser here, a little Tripping Daisy there, yet somehow still wholly ahead of its time. For me, it's a pretty perfect album. Dig it. —Simone Carter (Nineteen Something)

**TIGERS IN FURS: Self-titled: 7" EP**

Opener, "Ciro," is steeped in swaggering Heartbreakers worship. The remaining two tunes are more straightforward punk, still with a bit of strut in 'em, but not as overt a bluesy rock in evidence. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tigers In Furs)

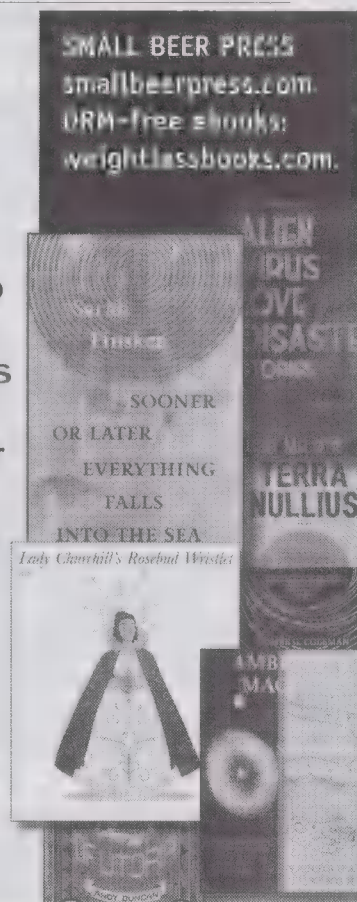
**TOM BOIL: Everything's Fine and That's the Problem: CS**

Tom Boil? Is that like a crab boil but we're boiling alive dudes? I'm here for it. Are all these songs named after dinosaurs? You bet they are. I'm a big fan of nonmen screaming in anger and let's face it there's plenty to be angry about. This Tulsa hardcore band has at times a shoegaze, experimental vibe to it that makes for a cathartic build to the lyrics, which appear to be centered around themes of sexual assault. There's urgency to the way the screaming, shouted lyrics sit on top of at times



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dreamy and at times harsh melodies. It drives you to pay attention. I was sitting up straight by the end of the opening track, "Hadrosaurus," when I heard the line "Everything's fine and that's the problem. Everything's fine and you're the fucking problem." The message is raw. It's real and it's relatable. I am one hundred percent here for this record and I feel like this band is one hundred percent here for me. —Lorien Lamarr (Crass Lips)

#### **TORTURE GARDEN / THE WORLD IS A VAMPIRE: *Decadencetomb: 7" EP***

Torture Garden: Thrashy crust in the dual-vocal mode, neither of which are particularly intelligible. Loud, gallopy, pissed. The World Is A Vampire: A mix of goth, crust, and pummeling grindcore that somehow works. Their last song even throws in a bit of '90s alt-rock influence. Strange, but effective. —Jimmy Alvarado (IFB)

#### **TOTAL DEFEAT: *Self-titled: CS***

Good old fashioned, bare bones hardcore from Perth, Australia. Nothing flashy here; just bruiser tempos, crushing riffs, and antagonizing vocals with lyrics outlining the drudgery and monotony of daily life. Seven songs in eight minutes and not a moment wasted. Recommended if you dig Xclaim! Records, Urban Blight, and baseball bats wrapped in barbed wire. —Juan Espinosa (Is This My World, totaldefeatcb.bandcamp.com)

#### **TOYS THAT KILL / IRON CHIC:**

##### **Split: LP**

Two of the finest bands of our time convene for one of the best split LPs in ages. The predecessor to Toys That Kill, F.Y.P., was one of my favorite bands of the 1990s, but they were rough around the edges live until their more mature later years. Toys That Kill, on the other hand, blew me away both recorded and in person from the beginning. That they're still putting out some of their best material two decades into their forming is a beautiful thing. They play melodic, multi-layered punk that defies easy labeling. Iron Chic plays more conventional, melodic, emo-ish punk, heavily inspired by Samiam. Iron Chic does it so well, though, and at times are even more powerful than their influences. Their material here is fantastic. I am pleased to see Iron Chic getting increasingly giant shows, including the 2019 Camp Anarchy festival. They deserve it! Yes, you need this record. —Art Ettinger (Recess / Dead Broke)

##### **TRIGGER CUT: *Buster: LP/ CD***

I first listened to this with in-ear headphones on and it felt like someone had put miniaturized medieval flails in my ears and was using them like cotton buds, such was the abrasiveness of the noise this trio was making. Formed by one-third of the similarly noisy Buzz Rodeo, there is a similarity in places to Big Black via

the Albini-like vocals and the sheer scratchiness of the guitar playing. It's hard to imagine this providing anyone with a relaxing thirty five minutes—as it makes me feel agitated and prickly—but that's not actually a bad thing, as sometimes that's what I want from music. Just to clarify, yes, the band does take its moniker from the Pavement track of the same name. —Rich Cocksedge (Self-released)

##### **TULLYCRAFT:**

##### ***The Railway Prince Hotel: LP***

Fans of these long-running indie poppers will be pleased with more of their literate, catchy songs and their mix of longing and disdain, their fun take on unfun moments, their interest in Delaware and the decline of Billy Joel. Yes, they are twee and, yes, they are cutesy, and those are aesthetic lines in the sand you may have trouble with. They have a Church Youth Group energy, maybe a Regulars At Trivia Night energy, too, and those are tough sells for me when it comes to music. On paper (literally the lyric sheet), they're great. I respect them and I rolled my eyes so much, if that makes sense. —Matt Werts (HHBTM)

##### **UGLY BONES: *Sunshine: CS***

Thrashy hardcore with a hint of horror, this Chicago band's record is not for the faint of heart. Hide ya kids. Hide ya wife. This record is out for blood. If you think Black Flag or the Germs are just too poppy and melodic, this is

what you're looking for. Personally, I have to get myself checked for a concussion just from listening, but I have to admit I really want to see them live (from a safe distance). —Lorien Lamarr (Don't Panic)

##### **UNKNOWN INSTRUCTORS:**

##### ***Unwilling to Explain: LP***

Tons of heavy hitters, none of whom play in the same room: Mike Watt recorded bass tracks in 2011 and had George Hurley add drums the next year. Three years later, J. Mascis added guitar in Amherst, and poet Dan McGuire added his words in Toledo. Despite the time and space between participants, this one hangs together better than any of the group's other records I've heard. Cool jazz noir; at once intimate and in-your-face. —Michael T. Fournier (Org)

##### **URANIUM CLUB:**

##### ***The Cosmo Cleaners: LP***

A couple of years ago I had the good fortune to be sitting in the kitchen at Razorcake HQ sipping a Tecate when Todd put on a record. "I think your really going to like this" was all he said. That was my introduction to The (Minneapolis) Uranium Club. It's safe to say that Todd has edited enough of my reviews over the last fifteen (!!) years to be an authority on what I am going to like, and he was correct. I was hooked instantly. I am a huge fan of the weird. When I first got into punk rock, as much

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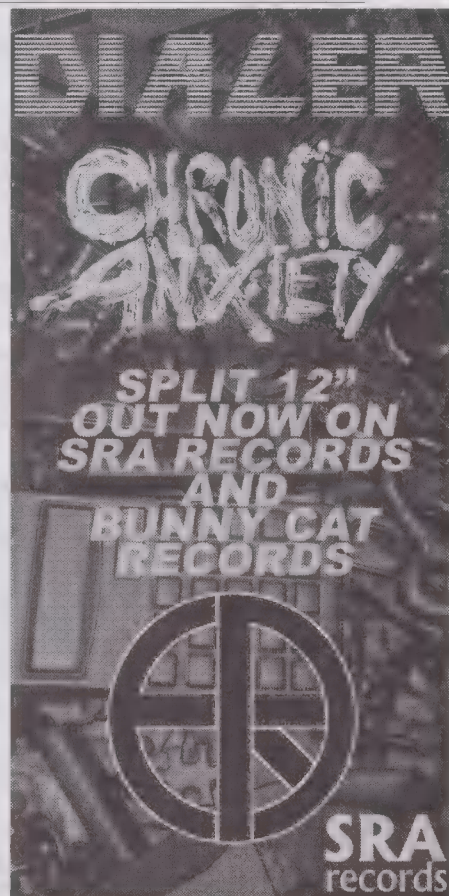
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as I loved Dead Kennedys, Misfits, and Sex Pistols, I was also drawn to Butthole Surfers, Scratch Acid, and Nomeansno. Uranium Club is straight up weirdo shit and they're glorious. *The Cosmo Cleaners* is out there. Disjointed chaos yet laser focused. For a moment I found myself wishing I still got high because this album would be a blast while blasted. As a whole, I don't think this album is as good as *All Them Naturals* but that is a pretty tough album to beat. That said, tracks like "Flashback Arrestor," "Man Is the Loneliest Animal," and "Geodesic Son" are absolute rippers and the twelve minutes-plus "Interview with the Cosmo Cleaners" is a journey, to say the least. Another winner for the bastard sons of Devo, Minutemen, and XTC. -Ty Stranglehold (Fashionable Idiots)

#### VAASKA:

##### **Inocentes Condenados: 7" EP**

I'm not too big on the whole d-beat phenom, which I often find largely way too derivative and pandering to the easy instead of trying to find a more singular path. There are, of course, exceptions, and Vaaska are one of them. Naturally, the Discharge influence abounds, but their mix of sincere, manic delivery and solid riffing give them a bit of personality that makes 'em stand out from a large pool of gray. Six ragers here, not a naff track in evidence. -Jimmy Alvarado (Beach Impediment)

#### VAGUESS: *Have a Good Summer: LP*

Their name is hard to say, their tunes are hard not to love. Just when you think everything is spazzy and punk, they hit you with some rad highway melodies. There's a slight twang to their songs; the guitars jangle like they're playing all six strings instead of just the top two. Songs like "A Long Time" and "Nevermind" hit me right in the perfect mid-paced spot. In the same way the Replacements kept a punk edge to their music even after they grew up, Vagueess can satisfy both your fast and slow side. Have a good listen. -Ryan Nichols (Refry)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Closer to the Grave: 15 years of Tor Johnson Records: LP*

This is a retrospective compilation of stuff released on Tor Johnson Records over the years. They're a pretty fucking eclectic label. The record starts off with the heavy hardcore of Saint Jude who end with a perfect segue into the indie singer-songwriter vibe of Tyler Daniel Bean in spite of the how different they sound. Bean is followed by the eerie, heavy beauty of Bloodpheasant. Death To Tyrants is followed by Furnace; both play a noisy, expansive post-hardcore to close out the first side. The second side starts out with some existential, angsty, emotive indie from Sea Of Storms and Lunglust play some pretty experimental hardcore with a deeply wounded vocal. Late Bloomer and

Aneurysm both play a grungy sort of hardcore and Ratstab sounds like you'd probably think they would closing out the album with energetic classic hardcore with a lot of o-shouting. I typically don't care for compilations. The segues are usually jarring and I don't like skipping or sitting through the mediocre stuff. This one, however, is really diverse, yet, still has an almost seamless flow. All of the songs are bangers, too. -Craven Rock (Tor Johnson)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### **Down South Spaghetti Accident: LP**

The vinyl compilation album is a format that I had assumed was gone with the hoghead, cask, and demijohn. I honestly can't remember the last time I bought one, or even eyed one up with intent, and I can't say as I missed them all that much, either. Usually they just sit there, festering in the bowels of your record collection, spared from eternal banishment by virtue of a cool song or two you don't know where (or are too lazy) to find elsewhere. Well, pass the fucking breadsticks: *This one's all meatball!* Fourteen songs by fourteen different bands, and nary a bad song in the bunch! The closest thing to a crappy track here is probably "The Call" by Fixed Faces, but, on the whole, this record is that most unlikely of high-carbohydrate noodle dishes: A compilation that a rational human would actually pay

money to own! Will wonders never cease? For purposes of conveying adequate descriptors for the sounds simmering herein, I'll quote a few of the brief band bios: RMBLR "follows in a grand tradition of both rock'n'roll and punk," whilst BBQT is immersed "in a swaggering mix of influences." Mama are "gritty power pop and rock and roll renegades," but the Ravagers produce "sick masterpieces of classic, alley lurking punk." I guess the more you describe this stuff, the dumber it sounds. Well, don't believe everything you read, this record's great! BEST SONG: BBQT, "Savage 512." BEST SONG TITLE: When I thought BBQT's song was called "Sausage 512," it was probably that. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Mama's name appears to have been left off the cover artwork and added, via sticker, after the fact. Holy "Sub-Mission!" -Rev. Nørb (Spaghetti Town)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### **Trash On!!!: 6" LP**

P Trash records was one of the few international labels that I can think of that during most of the 2000s released a steady stream of solid punk and garage records by bands from all over the world. In January of 2018, P Trash records founder Peter Eichhorn was tragically killed in an automobile accident. The news came as a shock to his immediate family. Word quickly spread amongst his friends

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and the punk community. Peter's wife Susanne released a statement on the label's website asking for some time to tie up any loose ends the label had but also regretted to announce the label would be no more. Later, it was announced that with help from friends No Front Teeth and FDH Records, a compilation—the final P Trash release—would be a tribute to Peter. *Trash On!!!* is a set of six LPs with a total of 104 bands, with nearly half of those songs previously unreleased. The six albums are housed in two album jackets and sit inside a specially made screen-printed tote bag. The track listing is a veritable who's who of punk and garage bands including recognizable favorites such as Mean Jeans, the Spits, Statues, Jay Reatard, Steve Adamyk Band, Digital Leather, Dean Dirg, M.O.T.O., Poppets, Nervosas, Hatepinks, and tons of other great bands. The bigger names who lent their talents to this collection serve as a reminder of how someone who would otherwise go unrecognized in a crowd meant so much to the artists we all know and love. On a more personal level, as someone who has lost a dear family member to an automobile accident, I can attest to the strength of love and friendship during a very difficult time when your life is forever changed in the blink of an eye. Peter touched so many lives and the reciprocity of their love shines through in this compilation. Hug your friends and

family. Tell them you love them. Buy your friend's band's records. Make new friends and keep in touch as often as possible. Because without love, what the fuck are we all even doing here? Cheers, Peter. —Juan Espinosa (P. Trash / FDH / No Front Teeth)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### *Trash On!!!: 6 LP*

An ultimate tribute to, who, by all accounts was, an ultimate music supporter and all-around great guy. In early 2018 Peter Eichhorn of Germany's P. Trash Records was lost in a car accident. The international underground music community reeled in the loss of someone who gave so much to the music he loved. It only seemed logical that the bands he rabidly supported would return the favor in his memory. That isn't a typo in the header. This is *six* LPs featuring 104 bands from around the world that Peter had worked with, rocked with, and/or touched in some way. From trash punk to synth garage, this compilation delivers hit after hit. It seems like for every band I was familiar with (The Spits, Mean Jeans, Outtacontrol, Steve Adamyk Band) there was a dozen that I had never heard (Glow Kit, Stalin Video, Brat Farrar, Bad Doctors). It took me almost a week to get to the end of side L, and by the time I did I was neck deep in new bands to find other music

from. A very big tip of the hat needs to go to both FDH Records in the U.S. and No Front Teeth Records in the U.K. I can't even begin to imagine the undertaking that this entailed. Fantastic work! Did I mention that all of the proceeds from this are going to Peter's family? Well they are, because there is nothing but class here. I highly recommend picking this up if there are any copies left. If not buy the download. A mighty send-off for a mighty personality in our music community. This release is pure love! —Ty Stranglehold (P. Trash / FDH / No Front Teeth)

##### *VIDRO: Alit Brinner: LP*

Withering hardcore from Sweden. They eschew the whole Discharge/play-fast-as-fuck template so many there follow, and instead opt for pounding, almost tribal rhythms, heavily effected guitars, and vocals that sound like they've just got to hurt the singer's throat two songs in. Oddly enough, there's a catchiness to the songs that keeps them from drifting into an impenetrable, atonal drag of a listen and a bleak streak that hints at some influences that maybe aren't quite so obvious reference points. Thumbs way up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kink)

##### *WLAK: The Wheel: LP*

I would wager my last \$/£/€ that these Spaniards have spent significant

time listening to the melodic punk bands that have been released by Fat Wreck in the U.S. and Burning Heart in Europe. Despite the cross-Atlantic influences, it's a very European-sounding record, with the accented English of the vocals adding a similarity to bands like Satanic Surfers and No Fun At All. *The Wheel* is an impressive debut which benefits from well-written songs and a killer drum sound. The latter element really snaps away whilst the rest of the band adds a huge, energetic buzz which peaks on "Intoxicated Society." This is my favorite track and, as an added bonus, it also features guest vocals from Wild Animals' drummer, Paula. That song alone is worth buying this for. —Rich Cockedge (Bcore / White Russian / Morning Wood)

##### *WEICHE: "Versprecher" b/w "Rückzieher": 1" EP*

Heavy-as-shit, slow German metal, complete with guttural vocals and just absolutely crushing tone. The internet tells me that "Versprecher" means "slip of the tongue" and, in this case, the tongue may be slipping directly out of the mouth to allow for how deep from whence the vocals must come. The second song brings in some second guitar melodies that really keep the heaviness while adding another dimension. I'm into it and though admittedly limited in my

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knowledge of German anything, I deeply hope that my impression that this represents something essential about the German music scene is correct. —Theresa W. (Spazz)

**WEREWOLF JONES: Self-titled: CS**

Gnarly Lumpy And The Dumpers mixed with Golden Pelican style punk. Knuckle dragging riffs with whiplash thrash and buzzsaw hardcore, Werewolf Jones is on the Total Punk tip. And I like it; I like it a lot. —Camylle Reynolds (Rare Plant)

**WILD ZEROS: "She Knows"**

b/w "Nobody Can Tell Us": 7" EP

I don't know; I honestly don't know how to tell this stuff apart anymore. That's not a criticism, it's just very straightforward '70s-inspired punk from some French dudes who, as they note in the second song, cannot be told what to do or say. And I have no desire to tell them either thing. What they do works for what it is. The songs are simple, tight, and on the softer side of aggressive. A few moments honoring the thread of old school rock'n'roll in classic punk, which is nice. —Theresa W. (Crocodile)

**WILD ZEROS: "Teenage Lifestyle"**

b/w "Vampire Girl": 7"

Wild Zeros are a three-piece poppy garage punk band from France. The first song is a cover of The Penetrators' "Teenage Lifestyle,"

which although technically garage rock, sounds really Johnny Thunders-esque with some juvenile lyrics about chasing a girl, wanting to stay out late, and being a "boy making a lot of noise." Big surprise a band singing basically a journal entry about being a turd teenager would have a name like The Penetrators. Second song is an energetic original about a girl who is a vampire who will "suck" various things. Glad this one didn't have a lyric sheet. —Candace Hansen (Chickpea)

**WITCHING WAVES:**

Persistence: LP/CD

Angular, groove-laden indie punk is what this London (U.K.)-based trio specializes in and this, its sophomore album, provides evidence of a band at the top of its game. There are so many elements here that appeal to me, including the warm, slightly fuzzed guitar, the male/female vocals, and occasional similarity to a slightly polished and less frenetic God Equals Genocide, especially in the dual vocals. An impressive release. —Rich Cocksedge (Specialist Subject)

**WONDERS, LES: Les Wonders: 7" EP**

A totally new band to me but Montreal's Les Wonders has certainly left a huge and extremely favourable mark with this five track E.P. It's an out and out banger, part punk, part hardcore, but one

hundred percent totally fucking twisted from start to finish, with Feederz and NASA Space Universe being the only comparisons that come to mind. I have listened to this at least a dozen times today and it is as great now as it was on the first play, providing much exhilaration and pleasure. I'm struggling to find out anything about the band but I do know that it is responsible for one hell of a single. —Rich Cocksedge (Imminent Destruction)

**WOOD CHICKENS: Well Done: LP**

Fast cowpunk/garage trash with surf shredding, a little twang, and tongue planted firmly in cheek. These Wisconsinites strike a good balance of rocking hard, being good at their instruments, and not taking themselves too seriously. —Chris Terry (Big Neck)

**WORLD IS A VAMPIRE, THE:**

Trenchsewer b/w Heartshorn: LP

Intriguing mix of goth, sludge, hardcore, and black metal from this New Orleans band that features members of Thou. Side A reminds me of late '90s Canadian bands like Union of Uranus and One Eyed God Prophecy, who mixed DIY hardcore and black metal to create this entire tornado of cathartic screaming and guitar fuzz. It's hard to Google a band named after one of the most famous rock lyrics of the last quarter century, so I'm not sure

if this is two EPs slapped on wax or an LP with different song suites or what. No matter what this record technically is, it's a powerful and engaging listen, even to someone like me who doesn't usually go for this type of stuff. —Chris Terry (Feast Of Tentacles / IFB)

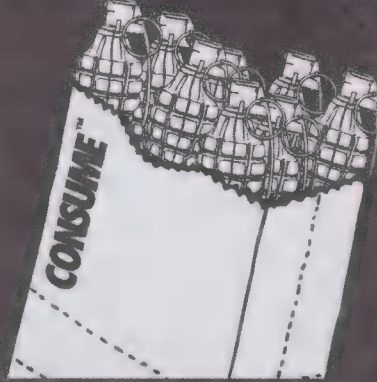
**WORLD TENSION: Self-titled: CS**

World Tension play a perfect blend of hardcore and metal that screams of the '90s so loud you'll think it's 1999 and not 2019. Occasionally, there's a release that comes around that you're hooked on from the first riff. This is one of those releases. From Las Vegas, World Tension's cassette follows up a three-song promo tape released in early 2018. Two songs from that release, "The Brightest Spark," and "Hate Thy Neighbor," appear here in newly recorded versions. The tracks "The Brightest Spark," and "Constant Madness," were my favorite for their riffs, particularly the guitar leads at the end of "Constant Madness." World Tension delivers everything that made '90s hardcore great, for a new generation to appreciate. —Paul J. Comeau (Running in Place, worldtensionlv@gmail.com)




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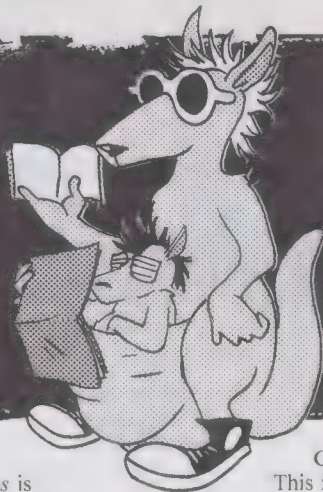
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—Mollie T. Friedman  
MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #100

13 POEMS, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied

Taking a nod from Fugazi's *13 Songs*, *13 Poems* is a subdued red statement on Rhine's subversive and sweet America that weaves its way through regret-tinged Applebee's karaoke bars and punk basements, Indiana Jones fantasy-scapes, rhythmic invocations, and meditations on skateboarding. I actually love this zine; it's one of my favorite poetry zines I've read in a while, maybe because I'm a weird sad nerd drummer poet too. Maybe because it's speaking directly about Rhine's experiences as a New Jersey punk, and the sadness and out of step-ness and hope and dirty carpet and critical nostalgia that binds that experience together. It's hard to not feel connected when someone is sharing so much in ways that feel familiar and honest. Fast read. Bound beautifully. 10/10 for me. —Candace Hansen (JR Rhine, jrhrinepoetry.bigcartel.com)

ASYMMETRICAL ANTI-MEDIA #3, \$1, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 7 pgs.

*Asymmetrical Anti-Media* is a zine that reviews other zines with a few music reviews thrown in, too. While I'm not normally a huge fan of these kinds of zines, the author, Jason, does a quality job of reviewing each publication. His comments aren't superficial and he gives his opinion on both the content and layout. I appreciated the scope he took. I also appreciated the review of the Punks and Mental Health issue of *Razorcake*, even if it wasn't entirely favorable. This isn't necessarily something I would go out of my way to read again, but it's well done for what it is. —Kurt Morris (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201)

BEHIND THE ZINES #7, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 38 pgs.

The always-engaging Billy who writes *Proof I Exist*, and *Last Night at the Casino*, and other titles has put together this zine about zines. The first piece is by Billy. It's about zines and anti-capitalism and how he refuses to let go of the old school punk ethic of making zines and being a bit alienated from new school zinesters who now boast of how much they can sell a zine for rather than how many copies they were able to scam. He also shouts out *Razorcake* in that piece. Thanks, Billy. We do our part! There are articles about creating a graph to keep track of where your zines go, a story from a reluctant zinester who overcame their perfectionist tendencies to embrace zine culture, reviews of zine events, a zinester interview, and some reviews. As I write this, I'm sitting on the Amtrak, drinking alone, sad for a time when people would hang out in the lounge car drinking together instead of staying in their seats looking at their phones. I recall a time when I handed zines out to people I met. A few of them wrote me emails telling me how important my words were and I'll never forget that. Don't let human connection die. Quit looking at your damned phone and call somebody on it. Talk to strangers. Read zines. Sit down and *order* a fucking zine. —Craven Rock (Billy, PO Box 22551, Baltimore, MD 21203, lknowbilly@gmail.com)

BLEACHED POLAROID PROJECT, \$2, 5 1/4" x 4", Laserjet, 20 pgs.

This collection of bleached Polaroids is quite beautiful. Whether or not there is a story to these is up to debate. Since these are all assumed to be images from the lives of the photographers, it gives itself some meaning as snapshots from small moments they've lived. Bleaching the Polaroids creates this color distortion that's interesting. The color saturation is boosted to a maximum, and most of the time creates a pastel look to them. Damn, the colors really bring my eye holes a great joy. It makes me wish I could frame these and put them on my walls, so I can look at them and vomit rainbows out of my eyes. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Desilu Muñoz and Stephanie Segura, lachambapress.tumblr.com)

CHOKO ON A LAUGH #1, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 54 pgs.

This zine is a look at the music scene in the Antelope Valley, the area north of Los Angeles on the edge of the Mojave Desert. I didn't know anything about this part of the country but it's far from the rest of the world, yet still appears to have a punk scene. *Choke on a Laugh* begins with a scene history of the valley, which seems comprehensive. This essay sets the stage for the rest of the zine. Also included is a review section and interviews with local and not-so-local bands, including Nihilth, Freakees, and Lucretia. The interviews are fairly lengthy for a zine, or at least more than four or five questions. Perhaps the best way to describe *Choke on a Laugh* is that it's like if a scene report from *Maximum Rock'n'roll* grew into an entire zine. I'm not sure how much this would be of interest to those outside this scene or without connections to the bands interviewed, but good on the folks behind this zine for keeping the scene going. —Kurt Morris (ss418737@gmail.com)

CREATING SAFER SPACES FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES,

\$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 8 pgs.

A great beginner's guide for those who wish to be respectful to those with disabilities, because, honestly, you were probably an asshole about it. This zine by Rep Tilian is great, as it's very blunt, which is a tone that's needed since lots of people are so condescending in how they act with disabled folk and don't realize it. It's like a wake-up call, and slam!—something to open up your eyes. Pick this up if you want to know if maybe you are being a douche without knowing it, and you can try to be a better person. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Rep Tilian, no address listed.)

CRIES FROM THE GULAG, #6 & #7, one sheet, copied, 2 pgs.

Nothing but classified ads from folks in prison seeking pen pals and support. Get this and show them some. ACAB! —Craven Rock (James M. Dawson, PO Box 950, Spokane, WA 99210)

DEEP FRIED, \$1, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 28 pgs.

When I imagine the pure, Platonic ideal of a digest-sized fanzine who *raison d'être* revolves around the mirth and woe of fast food, what I imagine is something fairly crappy looking, with hand-scrawled headlines, large, uninterrupted blocks of small text, and an occasional accompanying image of a BK Broiler® cut out of an advertising mailer. Startlingly, *Deep Fried* is actually pretty well-written, with reasonably slick graphics, proving once and for all that "value menu" and "quality" need not be mutually exclusive. Brief, fast-paced interviews (generally revolving around fast food, natch) include Mannequin Pussy and Joe Pickett of the Found Footage Film Festival; other tastefully McNugget®-sized articles include an explanation on how one used to be able to wax a ledge for skateboarding purposes with a Wendy's soda cup, and the origin of Jell-O® Instant Pudding™. As the Descendents once said, "eating is believing." —Rev. Nørð (2901 Yosemite Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55416, videophobia222@hotmail.com)

DON'T BE A DRAG, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 16 pgs.

Hell yeah! You gotta love some dope-ass queer weirdo art. This collection of some work by Anthony Hurd is a good, compact collection of aggressive, trashy artwork which combines political and sexual themes into a great gravy mash. There is great detail in each drawing from scales to skin, and its crass look is very appealing. There's even a very unnerving drawing of human teeth with its own pair of teeth. Anything that terrifies me or makes me uneasy is a winner. It's in-your-face and awesome. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Anthony Hurd, instagram.com/anthony.hurd)



## EARTH FIRST!: THE JOURNAL OF ECOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

Winter 2018, \$6.50, offset, 8" x 10½", 56 pgs.

If I'm being honest, I've always had a disconnect with environmental issues. This longstanding journal from one of the world's most prominent radical environmental groups does a solid job of tying ecological matters to radical politics generally, piquing my interest. Questions addressed in this issue include how environmental issues affect refugees and how art is intrinsically related to environment. Nicely laid out, well-written, and thought-provoking, the *Earth First!* publication has the potential to exact change beyond simply preaching to the choir. —Art Ettinger (Daily Planet Publishing, PO Box 1112, Grants Pass, OR 97528)

## EXERCISING DEMONS #3, \$2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 22 pgs.

Don's latest issue of *Exercising Demons* was made in preparation for the Tulsa Hard Copy Zine Faire. He opens by reflecting on his realization in 2018 that he has depression. He reflects on who he has been over the years and how he's changed. Don began to look back through writings he had from 1993 to 1998. In doing so he came to see how long his depression went undiagnosed. Thus, the pieces in the rest of the twenty pages of the zine are free verse poetry. A lot of hurt feelings, anger, and depression is displayed here. Kudos to Don for working through things, especially for sharing his writing from over twenty years ago. That is a gutsy move. I'm glad that

made them want to start a band, and began the journey into digging for similar bands and music. Definitely relatable for any music fan, especially those of us who still collect physically instead of digitally. —Tricia Ramos (Gooberbutt?!, gooberbuttzone@gmail.com)

## GOOBERBUTT?! #2, \$2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 20 pgs.

Jason, the author of this zine, writes of his life in Flint, Mich., back in the late '90s and early '00s. Specifically, he tells of what it was like to be part of the punk scene with his band, South Bay Bessie. He also recounts tales of living in a punk house, the band's initial gigs, and playing at a nudist resort. One of the main venues in Flint at that time was the Local 432, a club where my friends' band played in the early '00s. I liked the space and the audience had a good vibe, so I understood some of what he was talking about in *Gooberbutt?!?* There was even a sweet ending to the zine about how he met his wife. The final page is a list of things Jason wished he learned while he lived in the punk house. There was some nice stuff, but then the last one was, "Jesus was way cool." I read that and thought, "Wait, did I miss something? Because that's a serious plot twist." There was nothing about religion in this zine at all. So I did some digging and found that the author of the zine used to be a pastor. That put it into context, but why even mention that? Otherwise, this is a solid zine that was a good

Don't let human connection die.  
Talk to strangers. Read zines.

—KURT MORRIS, BEHIND THE ZINES

the vast majority of my scribbles and thoughts are no longer around for people to read. And kudos to Don, also, for getting the help he needs with his depression. —Kurt Morris (notmovingpictures@gmail.com)

## FLUORAZINE #5, Free/trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.

Quoted from an included author letter: "Fluorazine is made in a prison, but I like to think it's not about prison." Made in a prison in Kentucky, this mostly collaged zine also takes essay submissions from other incarcerated people, as well as their poetry, thoughts, and advice. There are resources for writing to other prisoners, submitting books and materials that are desperately needed for folks, and info on an "Anarchist Prison Support Zine." The author also includes a review of the latest issue of *Razorcake*, as well as other zines and books they're able to get their hands on. The magazine cut-out collages are a bit overwhelming at times, but an indicator of the materials that are provided for incarcerated people, and a great reminder that art can be created in any situation. (Fluorazine, Kristopher Storey, 26731-018 FMC, PO Box 14500, Lexington, KY 40512)

## FOREVER: A COLLECTION OF LOVE LETTERS,

\$2, 5½" x 8½", silkscreened cover, 32 pgs.

Alright, okay, I'm a hopeless romantic. This zine pulls selections from the "Love Letters Anonymous" archive on Tumblr, which I'd seen before, but never in a physical form. Seeing these digitally is a wholly different, arguably commodified experience, where seeing them physically adds a weight I wasn't prepared for in picking this up. Some of the letters are apologies or unrequited, some wax poetic, where others are completely straightforward. The oldest are between a husband and wife during World War II. All of them are striking; this zine is almost overwhelming in the sheer range of emotions. This might, too, be because all of us experience love, and it's one of the strongest, stupidest things we feel. Either way, *Forever* has me dabbling away a tear, and I'm glad for it. —Jimmy Cooper (Natalie Woodlock, Sodapops Shop on Etsy)

## GOOBERBUTT?! #2, \$2, 5½" x 4", printed, 10 pgs.

Inspired by a love of physical media (CDs, records, books, et cetera), this mini-zine is about cassette tapes; specifically four prominent ones that changed one person's life. Everyone can relate to discovering your first favorite bands and the styles or genre of music that really spoke to you. The tapes that did that for the writer were from bands Faith No More, Burnt Toast, Vivian's Lunch, and Rugby Mothers. Each has a little back story and memory as to how the tape opened up a world of music,

trip down memory lane for me. If you interacted with the Flint scene or are just interested in reminiscing about '90s small town punk, then check this out. —Kurt Morris (gooberbuttzone@gmail.com)

## HEADWINDS #3, £1, 5½" x 8½", 24 pgs.

This is a great zine out of the U.K. that covers reviews of records, podcasts, live gigs, zines, and festivals, as well as featuring in-depth interviews. In this third issue there are interviews with the band Blankets from Münster, Germany, and Trophy Jump from Zagreb, Croatia, as well as one with the head of a zine and distro in Malaysia. The interviews cover the general sound and history of the bands, while also culturally coloring them in. I appreciate there are as many questions about their songs, feelings concerning football, and opinions on each country's politics. This zine helps to paint a very full picture of people engaged in DIY in many parts of the world. The bulk of it contains well-written reviews, including one of our own *Razorcake*. Kinda funny when reviews get a little cyclical like that, right? The only thing I didn't care for was the front and back cover design. Had I passed this zine in a cafe or bookshop, I'd likely overlooked it because it features a fox in a fez playing a clarinet. Far as I can tell, this is just one guy putting all this together, which is pretty impressive. Overall, I really enjoyed it and would be interested in seeing the first two issues as well. —Kayla Greet (headwindszine@gmail.com)

## ICH WILL NIX ALTER WERDEN,

\$5, 5½" x 8½", screen printed cover, 28 pgs.

This is a fictional story based on events from real life, so I suppose a way to categorize that would be realistic fiction. Written by Arielle Bungdorf, the story is told through a series of letters that one character is writing to her lover. It follows two teenage girls in 1979 who are involved in a relationship, though the Berlin Wall separates them. Peppered throughout are factual, historical accounts of life in Germany during the Cold War, as well as black and white photos from the time period. Anni tells her lover Micki that she no longer likes The Beatles and that punk is the new god. She dyes her hair turquoise and makes mix tapes featuring the Ramones and German punk bands for her partner trapped on the other side of the wall. Eventually, Anni reveals that she never sends these letters, as they would be intercepted by the Stasi and might just put them both in danger. I won't spoil the ending for you, though it is heartbreaking. A well-written and beautifully laid out zine that I definitely recommend checking out. —Kayla Greet (a.charamoy@gmail.com)



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#### JOHN CAGE: BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS ABOUT

THE AMERICAN COMPOSER, \$1, 8½" x 11", copied, 24 pgs.  
Spiritually more akin to a pamphlet than a proper zine, this is, as advertised, 161 factoids represented as pertaining to avant-garde composer John Cage. Said factoids were typed up in 12-point Times New Roman and printed out, then apparently cut out and individually rubber-cemented on the page, without conceit of graphics, illustrations, or embellishments of any kind. These "facts," if you will, range from the factual ("He pioneered a new conception of music based on the use of chance and other nonintentional methods.") "For work, he once washed walls at a Brooklyn YMCA.") to the yeah-I'm-pretty-sure-that-wasn't-him ("He has a cameo in every Marvel movie.") "His song 'Born to Run' is written as a love letter to a girl named Wendy.") to what appear to be random lines taken from mysterious short stories ("He watched his wife chisel white chocolate into a bowl. It looked like glaciers.") "He made his way by slow movements, nudgings of growth, like his own plants and flowers.") to straight-up tongue-in-cheek buffoonery ("He is a species of ground beetle in the subfamily Orthogoniinae." "He is a species of flowering plant found only on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines"). As pointless as this all sounds, this unusual work holds up disturbingly well with repeated readings, and

written with anecdotes, drawings, and a little bit of history of the area thrown in. This thick zine is a touching, running memoir-of-sorts from one person working through their grief of their father's death twenty years later. —Tricia Ramos (Minor leagues, smoo.bigcartel.com)

#### MINOR LEAGUES #7, \$7?, 9" x 10", copied, 114 pgs.

This is a continuation of the long form "Where?" which began in issue #6. In this installment, Simon continues to solidify the link between geography and family, linking his dad's untimely demise to the Shropshire region of England. A mix of prose and drawn art throughout—it doesn't feel quite right to say this is a comic; if anything, it's a graphic novel. I feel redundant when I review Simon's stuff here because it's hard to come up with new ways to explain how consistently thoughtful and dazzling each new issue is. Seriously, if you're not checking this one out yet, you need to be. —Michael T. Fournier (smoo.bigcartel.net)

#### PUNK LIFE, Vol. 26, #50, SASE, 5½" x 8½", copied, 16 pgs.

A collection of random thoughts, record reviews, and a smaller zine called *Nightmare AD* sandwiched in the middle. No idea how to order this. I guess you have to do the whole "ask a punk" thing. —Matt Average (No address listed.)

The anger many of us people of color feel can be hard to express. A way I never thought I'd see as a way of expressing these feelings is using clay figures. The emotion and power really shines through.

—Iggy Nicklbottum | KOREANGRY: AN ANGRY KOREAN WOMAN

I am using it, *I Ching* style, as the basis of my spiritual hygiene from this point forward. —Rev. Norb (raincloudzine@gmail.com)

#### KOREANGRY: AN ANGRY KOREAN WOMAN,

\$10, 5½" x 8½", Laserjet, 32 pgs.

The anger many of us people of color feel can either be hard to express, or a little too easy in the "shout at everyone at this bar and get kicked out of happy hour" kind of way. It can be a thin line, as many of those who do not understand this anger just see it as aggressiveness and/or whining. A way I never thought I'd see as a way of expressing these feelings is using clay figures. Using a clay figure as your personal icon is brilliant, and the emotion and power really shines through the figures. The passage and ravaging of emotions sometimes come out as physical ailments in Eunsoo's avatar, and the representations of stress and vice comes in physical forms. It works so well in this form, and makes it a bit more accessible to some when words don't work for them. Seeing all the perfect miniature recreations of household items and food is fascinating as well. Plus, it came with stickers of Eunsoo courting some fried chicken. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Eunsoo Jeong, instagram.com/koreangry)

#### MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #429, \$4.99, 8½" x 10", newsprint, 144 pgs.

Here's their final annual year-end top 10 issue. If that's your thing, then dig in. Otherwise, skip all that and see if the interviews with Damak, Constant Mongrel, and Ruby Karinto are to your liking. There's also a Beocin, Serbia scene report, a two-page photo spread of the 2018 Not Dead Yet Fest, columns, and record reviews (zine reviews are strangely absent). —Matt Average (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, mrr@maximumrockroll.com)

#### MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #430, \$4.99, 8½" x 11", newsprint, 96 pgs.

Sigh. By the time you read this, *Maximum* has come to an end. You know how it works: columns, reviews, interviews. Really wild to recently come back to this one after years away and see a loosening of the arch-ideologies that scared me away for a while: new diversity of coverage. There was no way, during the Tim nineties, a more freeform/organic band like Come Holy Spirit would have gotten coverage. I'm sad to see it go. —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

#### MINOR LEAGUES #7, £6, 9" x 8", printed, 114 pgs.

On the English side of the Welsh border sits a county called Shropshire. *Minor Leagues* is a personal work of a father's cancer diagnosis, living in Shropshire, and the memories of living in a small village. It is beautifully

#### PUNKS AROUND VOL. 3: THE STORY OF MINOT NORTH

DAKOTA PUNK 1989-2000, \$3, 5½" x 8½", printed, 31 pgs.

Minot, N.D. is a small, remote Midwestern city most well known for its Air Force base. This is the first of a two-part history of the development of their punk scene. Fueled by isolation, a small group of creatives banded together to create a community focused on fostering happiness rather than fashion, lifestyle politics, and virtue signaling; all of which are far too prevalent in the scenes of any major city. "When you're isolated, you turn inward—a perfect catalyst for the creative side of people." Chronicling the struggles of maintaining a DIY venue space and combating alcoholism, this history details how the punks of Minot, N.D. built a largely straight edge, progressive community centered around acceptance and friendliness. —Lorien Lamarr (Microcosm Publishing, microcosm.pub)

#### SLINGSHOT #128, free, 11" x 14", newsprint, 20 pgs.

There's some comfort in checking out the new issue of this long-running anarchist paper at the same time that *Maximum* is going under—these cats have been at it for years, and are still going strong. Tons of well-written articles throughout: resisting climate change, Brazil's recent swing to the right, white fragility, and—just in time for gardening season—composting and human poop. —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703)

#### subTERRAIN #81, \$7, 10" x 12", printed, 80 pgs.

*subTerrain* is Canada's premiere literary magazine, featuring the best in "outlaw literature." This issue features Lush Triumphant Literary Award winners in poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction, as well as work from a few contest winners from the Vancouver International Writers Festival. The featured pieces in this issue all evoke emotions of struggle and burnout, of bleak childhood memories, and dystopian landscapes. *subTerrain* is always a treat to read, even if it is a bit of an emotional drain after you're all done. —Tricia Ramos (subTerrain, PO Box 3008 Main Post Office, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3X5, Canada)

#### WOULD BE PRESIDENT, THE,

\$5?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 58 pgs.

The eleventh installment of John Dishwasher's zine comes in the form of a play, which loosely uses Moliere's "The Would-Be Gentlemen" as a framework for its farcical look at the Trump administration. To date, our president hasn't admitted to seeing aliens, but if he does, well, Josh Dishwasher called it. —Michael T. Fournier (johndishwasher.org/zine.html)







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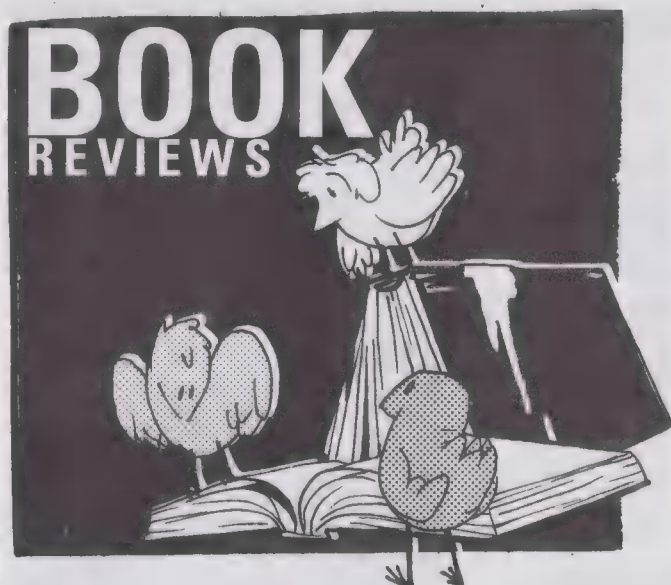
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### Black Card

By Chris Terry, 272 pgs.

I've been anxiously awaiting another title from Chris Terry since I first read his debut novel *Zero Fade* ■ while back and *Black Card* has not disappointed. I found myself laughing out loud more than once, and the way the chapters were structured really kept me engaged. It almost felt mysterious, like our own pasts can seem when we try to figure out what role we played in our history. While not a children's book by any stretch, it does feel like its own coming of age story. Humans tend to bloom on their own

made for children," and I have friends who would stop reading after that, and maybe you would, too. But if that's not a deal breaker, let's focus on those of you who keep coming across references to (as Karina Longworth puts it) Hollywood's first century, and you have a hard enough time keeping up with the Trump administration, let alone show business of the past.

Subjects of *Death Valley Superstars* include Marilyn Monroe, Jim Morrison, Elizabeth Taylor, Hugh Hefner, and Lee Harvey Oswald ("star" of the Zapruder film). And in Haney's previous essay collection *Subversia* (2010), the subjects include James Dean and Charles Manson (as well music essays featuring Elliott Smith and the Walkmen), and more about being an actor and a writer. Intro to Vintage Hollywood.

Haney also explores the lives of some forgotten actors, and I have to single out "Pluto in the Twelfth House," a riveting long-read about the life of Mark Frechette, whose journey from good Catholic boy to actor to bank robber is a tale of the '60s I'd somehow missed completely.

Haney's first book, published under the name D.R. Haney, is the novel *Banned for Life*, about a legendary punk rock musician. (*Razorcake's* reviewer Billups Allen liked it.) —Jim Woster (Delancey Street Press, delanceystreetpress.com / TNB Books, thenervousbreakdown.com)

### Dog Between Us, A

By Duncan B. Barlow, 244 pgs.

I knew of Duncan B. Barlow for years before any of his work came into my purview: dude has a resume. He was a member of a bunch of influential Louisville bands, like Endpoint and By The Grace of God. I remember reading his punk rock exit interview in *Punk Planet* after he was sucker punched at a show by the singer of a hardcore band (look this up if you don't know it already—shit is nuts). Barlow is also a writer. A few years back I got my hands on his novel *The City, Awake* and was impressed by the way he crafted bizarro time-looping noir pulp with ■ straightforward delivery.

*A Dog Between Us* is much more straightforward, but no less impactful. Throughout, the narrator is haunted by the demise and death of his father. Barlow is deft at depicting the way time slows in the brink of a loved one's

**Terry shows us just how fragile the concept of identity is while reminding us how very real its effects can be for our physical health, our mental health, and our very freedom.**

—Rene Navarro | *Black Card*

timeline, especially those who carry imaginary friends into their twenties and belong to a subculture that celebrates never growing up.

That's right, the main character is punk, so if you're reading this, odds are you'll relate to the narrator. At its core, *Black Card* is about race in this country and its unwritten rulebook we are all pressured to conform to. This is the story of one punk's struggle to create himself in ■ world that seems hell-bent on drawing its own conclusions.

What gives Terry a vantage point of interest is his ability to see an object from different sides of America's ever-present invisible wall and use this perspective to show us just how fragile the concept of identity is while reminding us how very real its effects can be for our physical health, our mental health, and our very freedom. From getting too drunk before you play, to dealing with people's preconceptions, the backdrops he creates feel familiar without being cliché, making for a novel based in the punk rock stratosphere without any cringe-worthy moments. I'm already excited to see what's next. Definitely recommended. —Rene Navarro (Catapult, catapult.co)

### Death Valley Superstars / Subversia

By Duke Haney, 304 pgs / By D.R. Haney, 218 pgs.

*Death Valley Superstars* (2018) is mainly a collection of essays about Hollywood's history. What's in it for people already well-versed in Hollywood's history? Some details they didn't know, a welcoming prose and some personal essays about Haney's experiences as an actor and screenwriter, which includes a tenure working for Roger Corman, and who doesn't like ■ good Roger Corman story?

Actually, while the prose is welcoming, I should mention that, in the book's first essay, Haney writes of being at a party and someone asks him if he was going to see *Iron Man* and he responds, "I don't watch movies

passing; the haze through which one walks daily to complete even the most mundane tasks.

This haze extends over his relationship. While *A Dog Between Us* isn't as gleefully convention-bending as *The City, Awake*, it does share some tricks, including a broken chronology. As Barlow's narrator Crag goes off into reverie, we're brought along to the past, to the way that the slightest detail can springboard back someone who's suffered a recent loss: to a week ago at the hospital, months ago, years. It's tough to be aware of these shifts away from the present through the fog of grief, something that Barlow expertly depicts. As the story unfolds, we begin to learn that these depictions serve a narrative purpose greater than simply portraying what grieving is. Crag misses signs that are literally taped up for him to see, and must deal with the consequences of stacking losses.

*A Dog Between Us* wrenches beauty from tragedy. Add another one to Duncan B. Barlow's resume. —Michael T. Fournier (Stalking Horse Press, stalkinghorsepress.com)

### Egg Cream #1

By Liz Suburbia

If you haven't read *Sacred Heart* by Liz Suburbia, you may want to stop reading this review right now and go pick it up. For those who have read it, or are just curious, read on.

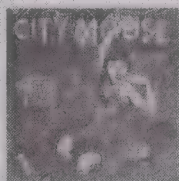
*Egg Cream's* main story takes place ten years after *Sacred Heart* ends. It's told from the perspective of a TV special documenting the events that took place in the commune of Sacred Heart, where a bunch of kids were left parentless to run wild in ■ lawless town. Through interviews and archival footage, we find out what happened to some of the kids after the flood.



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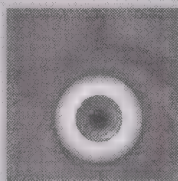
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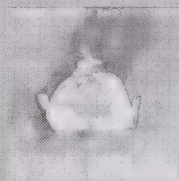
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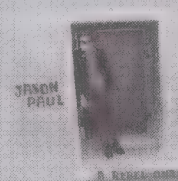
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If Liz Suburbia continues to tell these kids tales, that would be great. But if they don't, this follow up is a satisfying ending to *Sacred Heart*. It explains how the kids got there and how they were able to stay alive (most of them anyway). The narrative flows well and Suburbia's ability to make your jaw drop with one panel is, well, jaw-dropping. Their signature black and white artwork is fantastic, and the "commercials" thrown in are entertaining. The second half of *Egg Cream* is titled "What a Dog Dreams," which is a collection of illustrations and comics about Suburbia's dreams. Some are tragic while others are superbly weird and funny.

And if I didn't sell it enough, the paper used is like paper in a coloring book. You can color this comic if you are some sort of insane person. —Rick V. (Silver Sprocket, silversprocket.com)

Al Burian is a slacker, a very unsympathetic antihero, and in some ways, a loser. He can't seem to get beyond being his own worst enemy at times (as shown with his experience putting his foot in his mouth in court). Yet he somehow writes in such a way as to counter those detrimental qualities to make himself easily relatable and one of punk's most talented literary figures of the past few decades. —Kurt Morris (Microcosm Publishing, 2752 N. Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)

#### Nothing Nice to Say: Complete Discography

By Mitch Clem, 240 pgs.

*Razorcake* readers may know Mitch Clem as an illustrator and former comic contributor to the magazine. Back in 2002, he doodled up a webcomic

## You are reading this in *Razorcake*, so you will most likely get the humor in this collection. You are the target audience.

—Rick V. | *Nothing Nice to Say: Complete Discography*

#### Is This How You See Me?

By Jaime Hernandez, 90 pgs.

Jaime Hernandez and his brothers have been releasing the comic *Love and Rockets* since the early '80s. Jaime's *Locas* stories focus on the punks and alts living in Hoppers, a fictional town south of Los Angeles. His main protagonists are Maggie and Hopey, two Chicana women who age along with the author. They started off as teenagers and now they are in their late forties. Their friendship gets rocky throughout the series and it continues in this story.

*Is This How You See Me?* finds Maggie and Hopey going back to Hoppers for a punk reunion show. While there, we see how a lot of characters and the town have aged. Throughout the book, we get flashbacks to the beginning of their friendship back in the early '80s. The duo still finds themselves wandering the streets of Hoppers at 3AM, running into trouble just as they did thirty years before.

This book flows better than Hernandez's earlier *Locas* stories. And, of course, the artwork is solid. The panels pop with his signature pulp style mixed with the occasional very cartoonish facial expressions. This book proves that you're really never too old to jump in the pit. But also, what are you proving by doing so? —Rick V. (Fantagraphics Books, fantagraphics.com)

#### No Apocalypse

By Al Burian, 192 pgs.

I love Al Burian. He is hands-down my favorite living author today, and certainly one of my favorite authors of all time. His take on punk culture is laced with existential despair and matter-of-fact commentary. This is all done in a dry manner, but which often comes across as hilarious.

Thus it shouldn't come as a surprise that I loved *No Apocalypse*. The book is comprised of his columns from *Punk Planet*, *HeartattaCk*, and *Skeleton*. I read some of these writings in *Punk Planet*, but it's been a long time since then, and it was refreshing to come across them again. The *Punk Planet* columns take up the predominant amount of space in the book.

Burian's writing is, for the most part, consistent in its take on what it's like to be a slacker in the late '90s and early '00s. There are a lot of words spent not just on music and Burian's adventures, but also on President George W. Bush, who was in office during the time when many of these pieces were written. In hindsight, it's almost comical how we thought Bush was the worst President ever, although all things considered, at least Donald Trump hasn't sent thousands of soldiers overseas to kill thousands of people unconnected to terrorism, all based on a lie. Still, the similarities of how bad politics can get is appropriate for our current state of affairs.

What gets me most about *No Apocalypse* is how insightful it is. His comments on how it can feel strangely freeing when one loses their parents are something about which I hadn't given any thought yet makes sense. He also has his tales of riding the Greyhound, a line of his writing of which I never tire. His looks at this particular slice of Americana who ride the 'hound makes me smile and laugh. Burian's literary flair comes out most striking in these situations. He keeps the reader on edge wondering if an oddly paired couple will make it back to the bus in time from their rest stop. It seems strange, but I was fully engaged.

focusing on jokes in the realm of punk called *Nothing Nice to Say*. It mostly revolved around the main characters Blake and Fletcher poking fun at the music and culture they surrounded themselves with. The comic went off and on for ten plus years and now every single comic is in one big fat collection.

A good chunk of the comics are three-panel gag strips but Clem later moved onto full-page strips with some continuity and connecting storylines. Throughout the years he would introduce new characters such as an emo kid named Phillip, goth duo Alice and Karen, and a bear named Cecil. All the comics still make jokes about bands and punk-related things. He would occasionally throw in a reference to mainstream comics that some hardcore nerds will appreciate.

Mitch's style may remind people of Archie Comics, except more animated. As you would expect, you see the drawing get better through the years. Mitch takes the time to draw impressively detailed backgrounds where it may not be necessary, but it really shows off his skill as an artist and not just a funny-man cartoonist. And these are laugh-out-loud funny. Maybe avoid reading it in the library or a public bathroom. As mentioned before, you are reading this in *Razorcake*, so you will most likely get the humor in this collection. You are the target audience.

At page 197 the collection switches gears and becomes the complete *Coffee Achievers* collection. It's a story about coffee shops, gargoyles, magic, and mix tapes drawn by Joe Dunn and written by Mitch Clem. Most of the main cast of *Nothing Nice to Say* appear in this story and you might be thrown back by the way Dunn draws them. But overall, the story is good and you will wish there was more of the *Coffee Achievers*.

At twenty-five dollars, some folks maybe are hesitant to buy this collection. But it's beautifully bound, sturdy, and can hold up on the coffee table or toilet tank in any old fifteen-roommate household. —Rick V. (Silver Sprocket, silversprocket.com)

#### Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good

By adrienne maree brown, 464 pgs.

From the Online Etymology Dictionary: *radical* (adj.) ... from Late Latin *radicalis* "of or having roots" ... Meaning "going to the origin, essential."

Different roots serve as political starting points for entering The Struggle. For some, the starting point is education. For some, it's ensuring that the poor have access to credit. For adrienne maree brown, it's pleasure. Second-wave feminists said, "The personal is political"; however one interprets that (and there's no consensus on how to interpret it), *Pleasure Activism* furthers the conversation.

The book is "written and gathered" by brown. In addition to essays by brown, it also features interviews by and conversations with brown, as well as essays by other people, mostly women of color, mostly sexually marginalized. The book's theme (roughly) is finding pleasure despite trauma. You can't be whole without pleasure and you can't go out and truly rip it up unless you're whole (insofar as anyone is).

Not every chapter is for everyone—I should have listened to Beyoncé's *Lemonade* by now, but haven't, and so skimmed the chapters about it—but the book is so varied that if you keep it around after reading the chapters that currently interest you, other chapters will likely interest you in a year or two (sort of like a music guide—*The Wire Primers* leaps to mind).



*Pleasure Activism*, I have to say, is dotted throughout with *Oh, Christ—seriously?* moments. One of the book's blurbs is from an "anti-oppression consultant"—which I suppose isn't necessarily a hustle. Brown claims to have been bitten by a vampire (leaving unaddressed whether she's a vampire currently). One of her interview subjects talks about the pleasure she gets from her "anti-Zionist home bubbly water machine," whatever in the earthly motherfuck that is.

I requested the reviewer's copy after reading online somewhere this line from the back cover summary: "How do we make social justice the

Sullivan uses his lyrics as chapter headings throughout. The first section provides a quick discussion of the origin of Rastafari. From there, Sullivan provides historical incidents which spin off of alternate takes on contemporary history. He meticulously sources his work throughout, whether providing a Howard Zinn-like take on the settlement of America by Africans predating Columbus, or in discussing political prisoners like Marilyn Buck.

It's fascinating to read how Sullivan practices his faith: in addition to writing this book, he does work with prisoners with cooperative

## You can't be whole without pleasure and you can't go out and truly rip it up unless you're whole (insofar as anyone is).

—Jim Woster | *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*

most pleasurable human experience?" I thought the book was about how to attract people to activism—mainly it's not, though Brown does discuss this in her conversation with Dallas Goldtooth, a Standing Rock activist. The conversation concerns how to bring a certain amount of spirit-supporting fun to activism while still comporting yourself in such a way that people in power, and people who don't know what to think about your movement, still take you seriously. If you've wrestled with that, he has thoughts for you. —Jim Woster (AK Press, akpress.org)

**Revolutionary Threads: Rastafari, Social Justice, and Cooperative Economics**  
By Bobby Sullivan, 224 pgs.

Bobby Sullivan is likely known to *Razorcake* readers—he's the singer of DC's Soul Side. Beyond this, he's a practicing Rastafarian and social activist. It's fascinating to see how he weaves the threads of his life together in *Revolutionary Threads*.

grocer groups. Since Rasta is deeply anti-colonialism, Sullivan's immersion in the punk activism of Washington DC informs his faith, and vice-versa. By all metrics, the work Sullivan does is *punk*—and it serves his own spiritual needs as well as the community. I had never made this connection with Rastafarianism prior to reading.

Each chapter herein works as a standalone, but comes together to form a greater whole which serves to illuminate Sullivan's faith and the very understandable ways that his work does good and challenges outdated colonialist conventions. *Revolutionary Threads* is an engaging, lively, well-thought book which provides a picture of Rastafarianism in action, for punks and beyond. —Michael T. Fournier (Akashic, akashicbooks.com)



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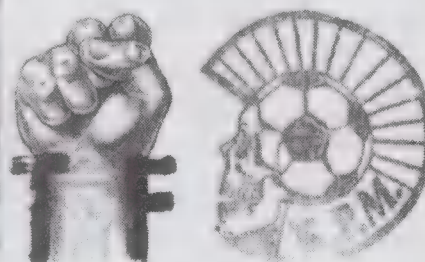
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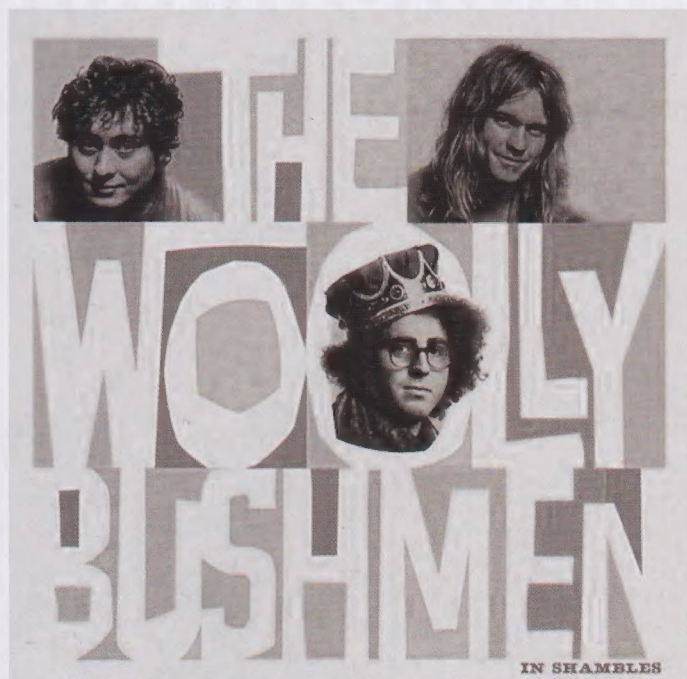
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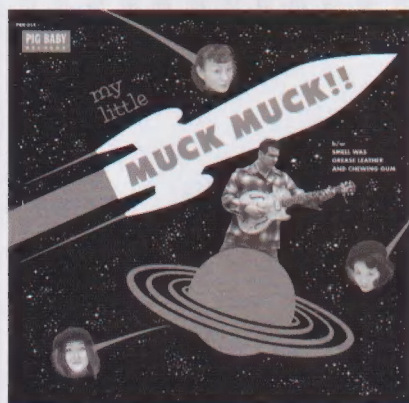
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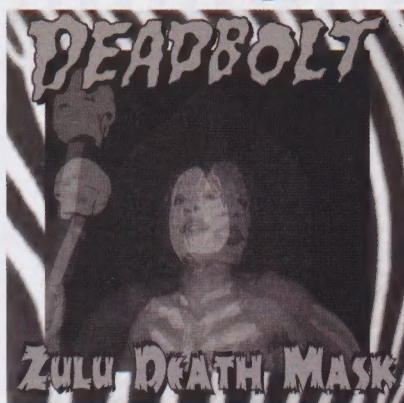
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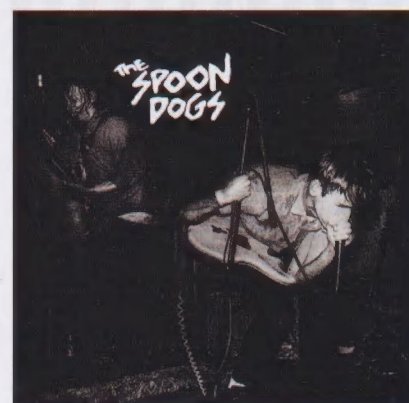
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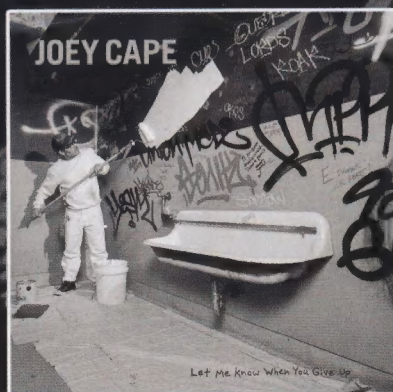






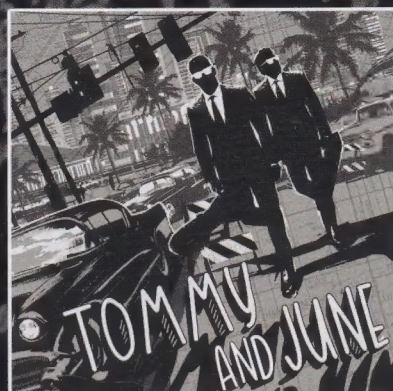
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